

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS

KEZIA'S STORIES:
A READING OF FOUR TALES BY
KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Dissertação apresentada à Universidade Federal
de Santa Catarina para a obtenção do grau de
MESTRE EM LETRAS
OPÇÃO INGLÊS E LITERATURA CORRESPONDENTE

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FLORIANÓPOLIS

1 9 9 1

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para a obtenção do
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To my beloved husband,
daughter, son,
and mother.

To the memory of my dear father,
my first adorable teacher.

To the memory of Katherine Mansfield,
in the hope that I have not
been unfair to her feelings
and principles.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish I could say thank you to everyone who directly or indirectly helped me to compose this work. In the first place I want to thank Jehovah God, for — in "His loving-kindness which is to time indefinite" (Psalms 100:5) — He has given me strength and insight and courage to persevere.

Moving back some twenty-five years, I want to thank my professors at the Federal University of Ceará, notably Professor Heloísa Maria Fiúza Boxwell and Professor Pedro Paulo de Sousa Montenegro, who played special roles in my life. The former, not only presented to me (in a short time) the whole structure of the English language, but (with her fantastic methodology) enabled me to learn and simultaneously enter the professional world of English teaching. The latter, believing in my work, invited me to be his assistant, granting me the opportunity to be a member of the teaching staff of that University.

Now I want to direct my warm thanks to my colleague Professor Aurineide Costa da Penha, who encouraged me to take this graduate course in Florianópolis.

Here at the Federal University of Santa Catarina I found a valuable support, especially in Professor Hilário I. Bohn, Professor Sérgio L. Prado Bellei, Professor Susa-

na B. Funck, and Professor Bernadete Pasold. I feel particularly indebted to Professor Pasold for her rich classes, her quaint interest in the students' formation, and her priceless contribution to the making of this dissertation, without which I should not have been able even to begin it.

I am immensely grateful to the members of the British Council who kindly sent us books, useful not only to my present work, but also to that of several other students who now have the books in the library.

I also want to thank Professor Bernadete Pasold, Professor José Roberto O'Shea, and Mrs. Ecy Lima Barreto, for the books they either gave or lent me.

My sincere thanks now go to the nice people I met in Florianópolis who somehow contributed to make my stay here pleasing and profitable. I shall never forget, for example, the kindness of Mrs. Elza Pereira de Souza Lemos who (not knowing me and my family) lent us her apartment till we could rent our own. Also, the Christian love I received here from the vast number of brothers and sisters in the truth (those who share my faith), made the difficulties I faced here become lighter and smoother.

Thinking of so many nice people who willingly aided me in the writing of this dissertation, my mind again resorts to God and once more I want to thank Him for the wonderful provisions He has supplied me with. It is full of gratitude, Jehovah, that I want to praise You and

repeat the words of Your faithful servant John:

"You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created"(Apocalypse, 4:11).

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this work is to appreciate KEZIA'S STORIES and try to find out their importance within the writer's artistic bulk.

The term 'Kezia's Stories' refers to the four tales written by KATHERINE MANSFIELD — namely "The Little Girl," "Prelude," "At the Bay," and "The Doll's House" — in which the child KEZIA figures as the central character.

These tales present particular aspects the attentive reader cannot fail to grasp, i. e., the autobiographical references and the literary techniques usually regarded by critics as being Mansfieldian: the subtle treatment of human feelings and behaviour, the introduction of the fragmented tale in English, the occasional effacement of the traditional figure of the narrator, the use of dramatic method, fantasy, and poetic prose, and the terse presentation of character contrasted with the careful description of details.

Considering the profile of Kezia's stories, therefore, it was decided to divide the work into three chapters. The first chapter displays a panoramic view of the writer's life and accomplishments. The second offers a detailed analysis of Kezia's stories and connects them with the

data covered by the previous chapter to determine their relation to the author's biography. The study of some theories and techniques of short fiction and their application to Kezia's stories constitute the major concern of chapter III.

The conclusion shows that Kezia's stories are indeed important samples of Katherine Mansfield's opus. Besides serving the writer as a catharsis, relieving her bosom of long-hidden emotions and perhaps remorse, the stories in themselves — for their richness in fictional artifice — have highly uplifted the value of the writer's production. To the reader, on his turn, like a rich banquet of exquisite and rare delicacies, the reading of these four tales by Katherine Mansfield has supplied the means of great pleasure.

RESUMO

O principal objetivo deste trabalho é apreciar as ESTÓRIAS DE KEZIA e tentar descobrir sua importância dentro do arsenal artístico da escritora.

O termo 'Estórias de Kezia' refere-se aos quatro contos escritos por KATHERINE MANSFIELD, a saber: "A Garotinha", "Prelúdio", "Na Baía" e "A Casa de Boneca" — onde a menina Kezia figura como personagem central.

Estes contos apresentam aspectos especiais, os quais não podem passar despercebidos ao leitor atento, isto é, as referências autobiográficas e as técnicas literárias geralmente apontadas pelos críticos como sendo Mansfieldianas: o tratamento perspicaz dos sentimentos e comportamento do ser humano, a introdução do conto fragmentado em inglês, a eliminação temporária da figura tradicional do narrador, o uso do método dramático, da fantasia e da prosa poética, e a breve apresentação do personagem contrastada com a cuidadosa descrição de detalhes.

Portanto, considerando-se o perfil das estórias de Kezia, decidiu-se dividir o trabalho em três capítulos. O primeiro capítulo apresenta uma visão panorâmica da vida e das realizações da escritora. O segundo oferece uma análise detalhada das estórias de Kezia, comparando-as com os

dados encontrados no capítulo anterior, para determinar sua relação com a biografia da autora. O estudo de algumas teorias e técnicas do conto e sua aplicação às histórias de Kezia constituem o propósito principal do capítulo três.

A conclusão mostra que as histórias de Kezia são, na verdade, uma importante amostra da obra de Katherine Mansfield. Além de servir à escritora como catarse, aliviando-lhe o peito de emoções longamente escondidas e, quem sabe, de um certo remorso, as histórias em si — por sua riqueza de recursos literários — elevaram grandemente o valor da produção da escritora. Para o leitor, por seu turno, como rico banquete de finas e raras iguarias, a leitura destes quatro contos de Katherine Mansfield proporciona momentos de grande prazer.

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INTRODUCTION

When reading Katherine Mansfield's stories one cannot fail to notice how often she recurs to children, especially to girls, and how competently she deals with children's problems. The child Kezia, one of her protagonists, appears in four of her tales, respectively "The Little Girl," "Prelude," "At the Bay," and "The Doll's House," giving the impression that she might be a special character in Mansfield's fiction. This fact roused in my mind the desire to evaluate the importance of 'Kezia's stories'— as I have chosen to call these four tales — within the universe of the author's writing. Although Katherine Mansfield's accomplishments also embrace poetry, journals, reviews, and letters, she is best known for her short stories which have appeared in most anthologies of the genre. Mansfield's stories about children — mainly the ones including Kezia — have been of particular interest to me. To study these four stories therefore, composes the subject matter of my investigation.

The critics I have read — for their frequent allusion to these tales — reinforced my idea that they should be representative of Katherine Mansfield's opus. First of all, Kezia's stories have to do with children, something apparently pertinent to the writer's interests. In the second

place (though written at different times: "The Little Girl" in 1912, "Prelude" in 1915, "At the Bay" and "The Doll's House" in 1921), the stories cover the lives of the same characters, i. e., Kezia and her relatives, and, interestingly, they may prove to be autobiographical, for most of Mansfield's work has been considered so by critics such as Cherry A. Hankin, Anne Holden Ronning, R. J. Rees, and Marvin Magalaner, just to mention some. Besides, the stories seem to assemble some of the main themes Mansfield explores in her works. Finally, they are rich in those formalistic characteristics generally attributed to the writer, being likely to present a clear picture of the style and the variety of form Katherine Mansfield so giftedly happened to master.

Although critics have extensively interpreted these tales, now observing the way Mansfield portrays characters, now analysing her technical dealings with the short story as a genre, none of them have focussed on the four stories as a block — what I have constituted the core of my thesis.

The present work can be described as having three basic stages: the study of the writer herself, the probe into Kezia's stories, and the analysis of the short story as a genre. In the first stage (chapter one) a panoramic view of Katherine Mansfield is presented — some germane information about her life, her literary ideas and production, and her recognition within the artistic circle of her time. Realizing the difficulties inherent to the biographical approach (all necessary here to illumine the

significance of Kezia's stories), a brief comment on this type of literary analysis, as well as some information on Mansfield's biography, will be provided. The psychological interpretation, for its close relationship with biography, will be treated here too. Nevertheless (as one can confirm by the reading of chapters II and III), it is the intrinsic study of the stories themselves — the evaluation of their artistic design — that has been considered of pivotal importance to elucidate the value of these tales.

In the second stage — the second chapter — there is an attempt to delineate any probable link extant between Katherine Mansfield's life and her tales, notably Kezia's stories. The investigation (based on the episodes, themes, and ideas tackled by the writer) holds the intention to view to what degree the stories involving Kezia can be sustained by Mansfield's biography and which causes might have led the writer to produce such pieces. Then there comes the discussion of Kezia's stories themselves and here — the development of the child, together with the characters' interaction — are bound to receive primordial attention. Also, having the purpose of using this material in the classroom later, it seems appropriate to present some summary of the tales to facilitate the understanding of the discussion.

The formal and stylistic aspects of Kezia's stories and their confrontation with other tales will be mainly considered in the third chapter which will also be

dedicated to the review of some theories about the short story — the subject matter of the third stage. This will be done with a view to determine to what extent Kezia's stories fit those theoretical principles and also to try to spot any innovation or contribution they may have offered to this literary genre.

In so doing it is expected that the reading of Kezia's stories will answer the principal goal of this work — that of finding out whether these tales are truly important instances of Katherine Mansfield's fiction or merely ordinary accounts about a family.

CHAPTER I

KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

"Now - now [I] want to write recollections of my own country. Yes, I want to write about my own country till I simply exhaust my store I want for one moment to make our undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the Old World. It must be mysterious, as though floating. It must take the breath all must be told with a sense of mystery, a radiance, an afterglow"(Mansfield's *Letters and Journals*, pp. 65-66).

KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S intention registered in the words above, along with the critics' assertions that she reflected her life in her literary creation, encouraged the use of the biographical approach to Kezia's stories, despite the shortcomings of this literary method of study. Cherry A. Hankin, for instance, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, wrote about Mansfield's 'confessional stories' (1). Anne Holden Ronning, specialized in Victorian, Edwardian, and early twentieth-century literature, states that "Like Joyce, Katherine Mansfield draws on her experience, and then generalizes it to portray family life in New Zealand", ... which is "strikingly 'Victorian' when compared with contemporary England" (2). R. J. Rees, on his turn,

says that

Perhaps the most important event in Katherine's life as a writer was the death of her younger brother, killed in France in 1915. He was probably the person she loved most, and his loss turned her mind towards the past and their childhood together in New Zealand. Although she never returned there, she began to feel a longing for her homeland, and... This longing was the inspiration of most of the stories she wrote during the next seven or eight years (3).

Marvin Magalaner, the author of **The Fiction of Katherine Mansfield**, and of several other books on James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Samuel Beckett, is another critic to see autobiographical marks in Mansfield's fiction. Magalaner's words (in his article "Traces of Her 'Self' in Katherine Mansfield's 'Bliss'") echo Rees' when he affirms that

Though her own attitude toward autobiography in art is ostensibly ambivalent... there is no doubt that she joins D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley among others in parading those she knew in real life through the pages of her fiction — and no one more consistently than herself. One need look no further than her letters and her **Journal** for evidence that her acquaintances and her relatives furnished materials out of which her fictional people developed. Her despair at the death of her brother "Chummie" during the First World War gave way to her expressed determination to re-create his and her New Zealand existence,

complete with sheep, grandmother, mists, parents, and siblings as a memorial to her beloved. The Burnell family, the Sheridan family, Laurie, Laura, the coachman, all are firmly based in autobiography, even when they take on the independent life of fictional characters (4).

One of the mentioned shortcomings of the biographical approach is its unreliability. The accounts presented by the biographer (seldom witnessed by him) are likely to be misleading. Doubts and controversies are usually raised and this has not been different in the case of Katherine Mansfield.

Ian A. Gordon, Emeritus Professor at the University of Wellington, New Zealand, who has dedicated part of his life to the study of Katherine Mansfield, says that the biography done by Ruth Mantz as well as the accounts written by Middleton Murry are inadequate, for the false information they provide. Mantz painted Mansfield, the person, as a rebellious adolescent. Murry called her a saint. The inaccuracies launched by Mantz and Murry, Gordon suggests, were picked up by scholars who came after them, especially for lack of proper data. Murry had kept Mansfield's manuscripts for himself, only releasing them after his death in 1957. Before that there came Antony Alpers' first book — a massive biography containing new material the New Zealand journalist had succeeded in achieving, for example, the story of Mansfield's first marriage supplied by George Bowden (the husband) himself.

Later, after reading the writer's manuscripts, Alpers makes corrections and publishes a revised edition of his work which has been well accepted today. Professor Gordon, however, thinks the biographer did not correct his mistake concerning the little money Katherine received from her father. Gordon assures that the allowance of £100 a year that Harold Beauchamp sent Katherine in the first decade of this century, would represent from "five to six thousand pounds a year, at the present day" (5). And Gordon laments that the portrait of Katherine Mansfield as the "starving artist" with a wealthy father in New Zealand has persisted and influenced the latest works done on the writer.

Gordon's ideas have not received unanimous applause, though. Professor Liselotte Glage (who teaches English literature and literary theory at the University of Hanover, West Germany) sees Alpers' second book as "a landmark in Katherine Mansfield research" (6). Among the "impressive body of biographical work" (7), Glage thinks, his biography shows the beginning of a serious critical analysis of Mansfield's stories, and of Mansfield's complex personality, for Alpers traces the writer's psychic disintegration from early childhood traumas: the lack of acceptance and love from her parents, to the life of hardship she faced in Europe: a lonely young woman, an outsider, fighting to show her power through her creative work.

Glage qualifies Alpers' work as honest. She quotes

the biographer's words to show that he believes his biography is by no means complete or definitive:

Having committed biography twice I sometimes wonder, after all, whether it ought to be allowed.... the customs of the time in which the teller of it lives, the currently accepted expectations of biography, will play a shaping part. They have greatly changed, between 1950 and 1980. The construct which results may be seen as true, but only for its time. Such a thing as a 'definitive biography' does not exist. Because of the changes in the view we take, it will always be changing (8).

Since there seems to be no end to biographies, how should one expect to find absolute truth in them? The true personality of a being is not exposed to human eyes. The books that tell the life of a writer are more akin to fiction and they reveal a lot about the biographer as well: his sympathy with the author, his desire to demonstrate scholarship, insight, and his own ability to handle literary artistry.

Yet biographies do play an important role in literary criticism. They can throw light on the work by explaining allusions, words and situations used by the writer, or they can inform the reader about "the reading of the poet [the author], his personal associations with literary men, his travels, the landscape and cities he saw and lived in" (9) .

That is another reason why the biographical approach has been applied to Mansfield's stories here. The intrinsic study of these tales cannot by itself show Katherine's purpose in writing them, something considered central to this present research. It seems timely, therefore, to draw a brief evaluation of Mansfield's life and deeds to unveil the design of Kezia's stories, the intentional phallacy notwithstanding.

Katherine Mansfield lived a short life (precisely thirty-four years) but what she accomplished is really satisfactory and praiseworthy. She wrote more than a hundred tales, several poems, and her **Journals** and **Letters** are valuable for the inspiring ideas and expressive lessons she teaches there. Moreover, our New Zealand writer marked her presence in the English literary scene through the balanced criticism she contributed to **The Athenaeum**, a literary magazine edited by John Middleton Murry, her husband. The reviews of novels she published there from April 1919 to December 1920, later collected in a book called **Novels and Novelists**, stand as a sound proof of her dedication to intellectual matters.

Notwithstanding that, Mansfield's thirst for literature did not stop there. She read the French exponents of the art of fiction in the original, mastered some German and Polish, and taught herself Russian to appreciate better the works of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Anton Chekhov, the nineteenth century masters who became exemplars in her time.

The pleasure she derived from the reading of Russian literature, along with the great concern she felt for the ordinary English

reader, made her embark on the hard task of translating the Russian authors. Together with her Ukrainian friend Samuel Solomonovich Koteliansky ("Kot," to his friends), she translated Maxim Gorky's "Journal of the Revolution," Chekhov's letters, and "The Diary of Anton Chekhov."

Part of this material, however, when republished in book form in 1921 did not bring her name but was said to be the work of Koteliansky and Leonard Woolf. According to Geraldine L. Conroy, Kot had declared that "the reason Mansfield's name was not used was 'because she was not then known as a writer'" (10). The evidence of her assistance in those translations from Russian can be found in the letters she exchanged with Kot, as well as in some books that appeared after her death: one in America in 1928 and another in 1931 in England, when she was given the credit of being a collaborator in the translation of Maxim Gorky's *Reminiscences of Leonid Andreyev*.

Mansfield improved her German during a stay in Bad Wörishofen (a cheap water spa in the Bavarian Alps) from June 1909 to January 1910. Katherine had been taken there by her mother who, on hearing of her daughter's misdoings (her sudden marriage and separation, for instance), came to London to put an end to her follies.

The truth is that Katherine Mansfield, when living with her parents in Wellington, New Zealand — where she had been born on 14 October 1888 — was not happy at all. She had been a rebel since childhood. Rejected by her

mother who could not handle babies and by her father who wanted a son, little Kass was confided to the hands of Mrs. Dyer, her devoted grandmother. Two years later, the faithful woman had to abandon Kass to assist her sick baby sister, Gwen. Left by herself the child began to have nightmares. "Beneath the chubby exterior there developed a nature that was insecure, and subject to terrors not only when asleep" (11).

As she grew up, Kathleen (she was baptized Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp) proved to be different from her sisters. While they were polite and affectionate, Kathleen was called "careless, lazy, indifferent, slow, and fat." Her older sisters Vera and Marie were helpful in the house, doing some cooking and needlework. Kathleen, however, refusing to do such things (to the disapproval of her family), would spend the whole day in the garden playing with flowers, butterflies, and little fish that swam in the Karori stream, in the back of her house (12).

It was there in Karori, three and a half miles from Wellington, that Kathleen began to develop and express through prose and poetry the great love she felt for nature and life. To this love she added an equal passion for reading, and she would eagerly devour any book she could lay hands on. The people she met in Karori were closely observed by her and later appeared as characters in her stories. When she was eight years old she got the Karori School prize for composition with the sketch "A Sea Voyage." It was this school in Karori that she painted in

"The Doll's House."

At the age of twelve, Kathleen "began and edited the first magazine at Miss Swainson's" school in Wellington (13). At this school she meets Martha-Grace, "Princess Maata," a beautiful Maori girl whom Kathleen greatly loved. At this time Kathleen's emotions were developing rather fast and perchance for lack of proper love and understanding, the girl feels ardent affection for some of her girl friends, from whom alone she felt she did not have to hide her own personality. In 1903, on entering Queen's College in London, Kathleen meets Ida Baker to whom she becomes very attached. She changes Ida's name to "Leslie Moore," later "L.M." and Ida proves her love for her staying beside Katherine whenever asked to till the end of the author's life.

After studying three years in London where she also practiced the 'cello — a passion she had acquired from her first love, the young musician Arnold Trowell — Katherine (against her will) had to return to New Zealand. More than before she assumed a rebellious behaviour to make her father send her back to London, the right place for the artist, she thought. Having decided to be a writer, Katherine hated the provincial manners of her people and fed her imagination with fantastic dreams founded upon freedom and independence. Finally obtaining her father's permission to leave and his promise of an allowance of £100 a year, she arrives in London in 1908, taking residence at Beauchamp Lodge in Paddington.

Too immature to profit from that freedom she so much cherished, the young artist soon engages herself in the irresponsible way of life of her peers, only to reap troubles and ailment later. Getting pregnant by a lover (the musician Garnet Trowell, the twin brother of Arnold) who could not afford to marry her, Katherine decides to be the wife of a singing teacher, George C. Bowden, whom she abandons the very day of the wedding. Mrs. Beauchamp then, arriving from New Zealand, takes Katherine to Wörishofen and leaves her there to be cured. As soon as she reaches New Zealand, Annie Beauchamp "cuts Katherine out of her will" (14).

In Wörishofen Katherine has a miscarriage and makes acquaintance with the Polish journalist Floryan Sobieniowsky who becomes her lover, awakening her interest in the Polish language and culture. Encouraged by Floryan, Mansfield writes a poem to the revolutionary Polish painter and playwright Stanislaw Wispianski (1869-1907), which Floryan promptly translates into Polish and has it published "on December 26, 1910 in the Literary Supplement of the Warsaw Weekly Gazety Poniedzialkowej (Monday Newspaper)" (15). To Mansfield's elegy — her third poem to be published — Floryan adds an introduction which constitutes the first critical essay on Katherine's writing.

But Floryan, who possessed some love-letters written by Katherine, proves to be a thorn in her flesh. For the next ten years he takes money from her and in 1912 he

cynically moves into the cottage she shares with Murry, staying with them against their will, from August to November. Finally in 1920, yielding to his blackmail, she urges Murry to pay him £40 for the letters.

It is during her stay in Wörishofen and immediately afterwards that Mansfield — making use of broad satire and irony — writes tales and sketches about the social behaviour and etiquette of the German people. These pieces, first published in *The New Age*, printed by A. R. Orage and Beatrice Hastings, were in 1911 collected and published in book form entitled *In a German Pension*, being this Mansfield's first book of short stories.

In 1920 when Katherine Mansfield had become known as a writer, many were the offers she received to have her *In a German Pension* republished. Editors and critics agreed that the book would bring her a lot of money, especially because it ridiculed the Germans who were hated people at the time. Although she needed money badly, Katherine was totally against the idea. In a letter to Murry she said:

I cannot have the *German Pension* republished under any circumstances. It is far too **immature** and I don't even acknowledge it today... **it's not good enough...** it's positively juvenile, and besides that it's not what I mean: it's a lie. Oh no, never! (16)

Studying Mansfield's early stories, the critic Mary Burgan (a Professor of English at Indiana University, who

has extensively published on Mansfield, Dreiser, and Jane Austen) says that "despite their crudeness in technique and lack of subtlety, however, the most significant stories in the collection develop a thematic in the effects of childbearing that would achieve central importance in Mansfield's later fiction" (17). Mary Burgan's words, very likely, focus on the crucial points which Mansfield referred to as constituting the "lie," — namely the technique and the childbearing theme.

If one compares a sketch in the *German Pension*, let us say, "Germans at Meat" with one of Mansfield's later tales, "Bliss," for example, one notices a profound difference between the two. While the former presents a mere conversation between the narrator and the impolite Germans during a meal, the latter displays complexity in form and content, describing the conflicts of a soul, the feelings that haunt the uneasy heart and mind of a young woman and the shocking reality she has to face.

In "Germans at Meat" the narrator — the "I" as protagonist, a central character who tells his own story in the first person, according to Norman Friedman's classification (18) — places herself among those misbehaved Germans and watches the Widow who picked "her teeth with a hairpin as she spoke," or Herr Hoffman who "wiped his neck and face with his dinner napkin and carefully cleaned his ears" (19). She identifies herself as a young English woman and conducts the narrative as if she were the writer herself:

Bread soup was placed upon the table. "Ah," said the Herr Rat, leaning upon the table as he peered into the tureen, "that is what I need. My 'magen' has not been in order for several days. Bread soup, and just the right consistency. I am a good cook myself" — he turned to me.

"How interesting," I said, attempting to infuse just the right amount of enthusiasm into my voice (20).

In "Bliss" the narrator is not always easily identified. Sometimes he stands as somebody outside the story, playing the role of Friedman's neutral omniscient third-person narrator (i.e. "the author speaks impersonally in the third person" (21), as one can see in the beginning of the tale:

Although Bertha Young was thirty she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement ... (22)

but, immediately afterwards, as one can observe in the second paragraph, the narrator who was telling the story and was not a participant in it, gives his place to the protagonist herself, who speaks to the reader directly:

What can you do if you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss — absolute bliss! — as though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that late afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks

into every particle, into every finger and toe? ... (23)

This shift in point of view — as demonstrated later in chapter III — is a technique Mansfield introduced in the English narrative. She made it even more intricate when she presented two or more characters interrelating, as the following lines from "Life of Ma Parker" illustrate. The narrator — outside the story — introduces the scene and then Ma Parker herself (the main character) commands the conversation, answering the questions of an indefinite man.

At sixteen she'd left Stratford and come up to London as kitching-maid. Yes, she was born in Stratford-on-Avon. Shakespeare, sir? No, people were always arsking her about him. But she'd never heard his name until she saw it on the theatres (24).

Another example of Mansfield's occasional effacement of the third-person narrator can be found in "The Lady's Maid." Here the narrator, after introducing the tale, disappears completely and Ellen, the faithful maid, tells a woman the story of her life:

Eleven o'clock. A knock at the door.... I hope I haven't disturbed you, madam. You weren't asleep — were you? But I've just given my lady

her tea, and there was such a nice cup over, I thought, perhaps ...

... Not at all, madam. I always make a cup of tea last thing. She drinks it in bed after her prayers to warm her up. I put the kettle on when she kneels down and I say to it, "Now you needn't be in too much of a hurry to say your prayers". But it's always boiling before my lady is half through. You see, madam, we know such a lot of people, and they've all got to be prayed for ...

... No, madam, I can't say I noticed it. Perhaps some girls. But you see, it's like this, I've got nobody but my lady. My mother died of consumption when I was four, and I lived with my grandfather, who kept a hair-dresser's shop ... (25)

Concerning the childbearing theme, Mary Burgan appropriately thinks Mansfield's feelings then were probably influenced by her own mother's dissatisfaction towards motherhood and by her present boss — the militant feminist Beatrice Hastings. In most of the stories collected in *In a German Pension* Katherine depicts women's frailty and their slave condition in the hands of pernicious men to whom they have to bear children as a form of payment for their own support.

In "The Child-Who-Was Tired," Burgan says, "Mansfield dramatizes the domestic violence that can result from the unendurable weariness of caring for small children" (26). Based on Chekhov's "Sleepy-Head" (or "Spat Khochetzia" in the original) the story narrates the experience of a young girl who, being ill-used by a rude couple, is forced to work the whole day and nurse the baby at night. The girl

is always so tired and sleepy that she smothers the infant to get some rest.

In "Frau Brechenmacher Attends a Wedding" it is psychological violence that she portrays, showing prototypes of characters she will develop in her later stories. Frau Brechenmacher remembers her own wedding and displays a feeling of commiseration towards the young bride who helplessly embarks on that career she so much detests. Later, on arriving home, her husband talks to her about their wedding night but "his words reveal the sort of mindless brutality that has transformed her into a passive drudge" (27). Frau Brechenmacher reminds us of Linda Burnell, Kezia's mother who in "Prelude" hates her responsibilities as a wife and shows revolt against motherhood and indifference toward her children. Linda feels weak and is subject to nightmares, daydreaming and hallucinations.

Yet, when studying "At the Bay" (a continuation to "Prelude") one notices a different tone Mansfield applies to the treatment of childbearing. In this story, after realizing she cannot help loving her son, Linda understands that the generative role the woman plays is part of the natural process of life, being the female elected to propitiate the continuity of human species on earth. Linda's acceptance of the boy contrasts with the rebellious attitude she had previously displayed:

There was something so quaint, so unexpected about

that smile that Linda smiled herself. But she checked herself and said to the boy coldly, "I don't like babies."

"Don't like babies?" The boy couldn't believe her. "Don't like me?" He waved his arms foolishly at his mother ...

Linda was so astonished at the confidence of this little creature....Ah no, be sincere. That was not what she felt; it was something far different, it was something so new, so... The tears danced in her eyes; she breathed in a small whisper to the boy, "Hallo, my funny!" (28)

It is this change in Linda's attitude, one may suppose, which echoes Mansfield's own stance, that invalidates her German tales to Mansfield's eyes, making her refer to them as a "lie." For in 1920, when Katherine made so strong a pronouncement, she herself had undergone a drastic change regarding her views and attitude towards life and death. The desire to express "truth," T. O. Beachcroft comments, was her main concern now: "the truth as she saw it — 'my religion of people,' — was not a vision inspired by the beauties of nature, nor of doctrinal notions, nor of any abstraction, but a vision of men and women seen at revealing moments of their lives" (29). And the truth she wanted to portray was strongly linked with her people and with her past. That wrongheaded youth who had written the *Pension* stories existed no more. The loss of an only brother in World War I, the misery of the war itself, the constant fight against disease, and her tireless dedication to the cause of literature, had transformed the heart and mind of that strong woman.

But coming back to 1912, it is then that Katherine begins to live with John Middleton Murry — whom she will marry in 1918. Murry is the publisher of **Rhythm**, of which she becomes Assistant Editor. Katherine, on leaving **The New Age**, exposes herself to bitter attacks from Orage and Beatrice Hastings who nickname her and Murry 'The Tigers.' Murry and Katherine keep moving from place to place, mainly for lack of money and the craving to find a good place to write. They are soon held responsible for **Rhythm's** debts, receiving financial support from Edward Marsh, Gilbert Cannan, Rupert Brooke and Frank Swinnerton. In the following year they reorganize **Rhythm** calling it the **Blue Review**, which disappears after three issues.

It is in June 1913 that the Murrys first meet D. H. Lawrence and Frieda, his German partner whom he marries in July 1914. The two couples share a good relationship which ends in bitterness three years later. Towards the end of 1914, Katherine, very dissatisfied, starts thinking of leaving Murry. She is then receiving love-letters from Francis Carco, a French writer she had met in Paris. "Some thing Childish But Very Natural" is the only story she publishes that year.

In 1915 Mansfield's difficulties increase. She has a very bad cough and other health problems mentioned by her as 'arthritis'. Her arguments with Murry and her infatuation with Carco — in whose apartment she stays in Paris — make her miserable and lonely, prompting her several trips to France and back to London, in spite of the

war. But what most disturbs Katherine at the time are her meetings with Leslie Beauchamp, her dear brother, and his accidental death in France on 7 October when a grenade blew up in his hand. Leslie had come to London to join the British Army and their meeting in February, before she first went to France, was unexpected and thrilling. The news he gave her of the people in Wellington certainly revived her love and longing for the land and folks she had abandoned. The seeds of "Prelude" (firstly entitled "The Aloe") were then sown in Mansfield's mind.

On their next encounter in London, brother and sister talk about their childhood for a long time and Katherine decides to write about New Zealand, as she registered in her *Journal*, "to make our undiscovered country leap into the eyes of the Old World." She would also write to tell what love and truth really were. This she tries to achieve in "Prelude" — 'My book,' as she called it with affection. Besides "Prelude," and before her brother's death, Mansfield writes important stories in 1915, such as "The Little Governess," "Spring Pictures," "An Indiscreet Journey," and "The Wind Blows," being the latter published in the *Signature*, a magazine recently launched by Murry and Lawrence.

Nevertheless Katherine is not yet recognized as a literary figure within the circle of contemporary authors. It is mainly through Murry with his printing activity that she gets in contact with other writers. In the summer of 1915 she begins to visit Garsington — a manor house Lady

Ottoline and her husband Philip Morrell had established to serve as a wartime refuge for writers and pacifists. At Garsington Katherine meets very important names of the English Commonwealth of artists, among them Dorothy Brett, Mark Gentler, Dora Carrington, Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Augustine Birrell, J. T. Sheppard, and T. S. Eliot.

The Morrells had previously lived in Bloomsbury, not belonging however to the "Bloomsbury group" which reunited at Virginia Woolf's and Vanessa Bell's houses. They "were as much observers of the Bloomsbury phenomenon as were Katherine and Murry" (30). Some of Bloomsbury's associates also paid visits to Lady Ottoline's Garsington, notably Clive Bell (Virginia Woolf's brother-in-law) and Lytton Strachey who arranges the first meeting between Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf. The two writers develop a friendship that lasts from February 1917 to July 1919. Virginia visits Katherine several times first in her studio in Chelsea and later in her house in Hampstead, where they talk about literature.

But in November 1919 Katherine Mansfield, very sick and alone, from the Italian Riviera (where she had settled following the doctors' advices) reviews Virginia Woolf's *Night and Day*. She sincerely expresses her dislike of the work for it did not belong to the "age of experiment" the English novel was then living, being "impossible to refrain from comparing *Night and Day* with the novels of Miss Austen" (31). Besides, Virginia Woolf's novel ignored the big war completely. In Katherine's opinion,

The novel can't just leave the war out. There **must** have been a change of heart... I feel in the **profoundest** sense that nothing can be the same — that, as artists, we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings (32)

In December 1920 the publication of **Bliss and Other Stories** brings her recognition but certainly no comfort, for Mansfield at the time is too sick to feel any happiness. Despite her constant fever and persistent cough (not to mention the gossips she heard about her husband's adultery and her father's grudge for the allowance he sends her each month), Katherine does not stop working. That year she writes "The Man Without a Temperament" (where she portrays Murry), "Je ne parle pas français," "The Stranger," "Miss Brill," and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel." These stories alone, for their artistical display of literary techniques, constitute an indisputable evidence of Katherine Mansfield's determination and ability to manipulate both form and content well.

Her third collection of tales — **The Garden Party and Other Stories** — comes out in the beginning of 1922, bringing her a lot of money and much praise from several magazines' reviewers. "The Observer's critic, noticing the theme of death, said that her treatment of it had a tenderness in its irony, a dignity in its tragicomedy," which reminded him of Hardy" (33). Katherine then declares

on her Journal that her strong desire is "to make good before I do anything else. The sooner the books are written, the sooner I shall be well, the sooner my wishes will be in sight of fulfillment" (34). So alongside the desire to attain remarkable expression is the longing to vanquish the battle against death, overcome that suffocating disease of hers and live to write.

By this time Katherine feels so disturbed that she affirms: "I have a suspicion like a certainty that the real cause of my illness is not my lungs at all, but something else. And if this were found and cured, all the rest would heal" (35). Impelled by an uncontrollable hunger to be nursed back to health the writer wants to try any kind of treatment available, no matter how expensive or strange it appears to be. Forgetting her physical debilitation she gathers strength to travel anywhere there is someone offering hope. Influenced by Koteliansky and Orage she examines the occult in a book called **Cosmic Anatomy** by M. B. Oxon. Then she tries Dr. Manoukhin's expensive X-ray therapy which leaves her exhausted but a little better because of the fattening diet he had prescribed her. She completes "The Fly" which is published in **The Nation** on 18 March. This story, Alpers says, is undoubtedly her most discussed and interpreted piece. "In America 'The Fly' attracted, between 1945 and 1965, a long series of academic explications" (36).

At the end of March Katherine meets James Joyce who visits the Murrys at their hotel in Paris and has tea with

them. In a letter to Violet Schiff Katherine says later:

Joyce was rather — difficile. I had no idea until then of his view of **Ulysses** — no idea how closely it was modelled on the Greek story, how absolutely necessary it was to know the one through and through to be able to discuss the other. I've read the **Odyssey** and am more or less familiar with it but Murry and Joyce simply sailed away out of my depth. I felt almost stupefied. It's absolutely impossible that other people should understand **Ulysses** as Joyce understands it. It's almost revolting to hear him discuss its difficulties. It contains **code words** that must be picked up in each paragraph and so on... (37)

On July 7 she writes her last story, "The Canary," as a token to her friend Dorothy Brett who was staying with her at Hôtel Château Belle Vue, Sierre. "The Canary" is a beautiful story that in a way summarizes the themes Katherine Mansfield had so well and frequently worked on: the importance of companionship, love, and understanding; the emptiness death leaves in our hearts; and the afflictive feeling caused by loneliness.

Using the first person point of view the writer, hidden behind an old woman protagonist, talks to the reader telling him about the singular bird that is now dead. The whole story is a soliloquy, a sincere confession of a distressed being, the twin soul of the writer's:

...You cannot imagine how wonderfully he

sang...I suppose it sounds absurd to you — it wouldn't if you had heard him — but it really seemed to me that he sang whole songs with a beginning and an end to them...I loved him. How I loved him! ...It surprises me even now to remember how he and I shared each other's lives....Company, you see — that was what he was. Perfect company....When I found him lying on his back, with his eye dim and his claws wrung, when I realised that never again should I hear my darling sing, something seemed to die in me. My heart felt hollow, as if it was his cage... (38)

But the end of the story brings a message of resignation as if Katherine, on saying good-bye to the reader, wants him to know that she is not in despair:

I shall get over it. Of course. I must. One can get over anything in time. And people always say I have a cheerful disposition. They are quite right. I thank my God I have (39).

Although the writer has declared several times in her letters that she does not believe in God, she feels the need to believe in something, something vital to the appraisal of life:

No, one can't believe in God. But I must believe in something more nearly than I do....Don't I live in glimpses only? There is something wrong there is something small in such a life. One must live more fully and one must have more POWER of loving and feeling (40).

After completing "The Canary" Mansfield writes her will and travels to London, staying at Dorothy Brett's house at Pond Street. There on 30 August she talks with Orage about Gurdjieff and his treatment of the mind for the first time. Shortly afterwards she begins to attend lectures on Gurdjieff's teachings given by his disciple P.D. Ouspensky. George Ivanovich Gurdjieff — a Caucasian Greek, whose origin and education were rather controversial — had founded an Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, which he intended to bring to England, eventually establishing it in France.

In Gurdjieff's theory man was not a permanent self, a single "I", but each man presented an array of "I's" "many of which said contradictory things" (41). It was necessary for man to investigate and discover at least most of his "I's" in order to understand himself and be understood by others. Gurdjieff believed that man, on developing a certain ability neglected others, being therefore unable to attain happiness. It was his purpose then to instruct man to exercise his "centres" in a balanced way: the intellectual centre, the emotional centre, and the physical centre. In so doing, man would "possess extraordinary powers" (42).

Katherine Mansfield found Gurdjieff's ideas very interesting and eagerly joined Ouspensky's group which included "A. R. Orage, the novelist J. D. Beresford, the psychiatrist J. C. Young, and various others who were looking for some new way" (43). Knowing that her husband would not approve of her attitude, she makes some arrangement to send him away from her, so that she feels free to decide what to do. In Paris on 14 October — her thirty-fourth birthday — Katherine, feeling confused and immensely depressed, realises she is so ill she cannot even walk properly. She picks up her Journal and records:

Thank God for writing...

And here, all these years, I have been looking for someone who agrees with me. I have heard of Gurdjieff who seems not only to agree but to know infinitely more about it.

Why hesitate?... Risk! Risk anything! Care no more for the opinions of others, for those voices. Do the hardest thing on earth for you. Act for yourself. Face the truth.... (44)

The New Zealand writer had then decided to submit herself to Gurdjieff's outrageous treatment which included physical exercises, dances, and work , accomplished even in the

middle of the night. All Katherine wanted now was to live and be healthy:

By health I mean the power to live a full, adult, living, breathing life in close contact with what I love — the earth and the wonders thereof — the sea — the sun. All that we mean when we speak of the external world....And out of this, the expression of this, I want to be writing. (Though I may write about cabman. That's no matter.) (45)

Two days afterwards she leaves for Fontainebleau where she finds the Institute still under construction. Gurdjieff — to whom she refers with respect and admiration in her letters — lets her stay there, "under observation," and promises to build a "hayloft furnished and decorated for her so that she could lie there in comfort and inhale the breath of the cows, which was good for the lungs" (46).

The kind of life she leads in the château is somewhat similar to the one she lived in Karori, during the first period of her existence (Alpers thinks) and which she recreates in Kezia's stories. As Kathleen had then enjoyed observing "Grandma Dyer in the kitchen with her shelves of bottled fruit, Aunt Belle discussing shoulder-straps, Pat Sheehan saddling up the horse or bringing in the cow's milk — or chopping off the heads of ducks," (47) now she spends hours watching the work and the to-and-fro of the busy residents. About sixty people (who treat her well) happily toil there all day long, closely following the orientation of the skilled master, Gurdjieff. The women

prepare the food, sew the costumes for the exercises and dances, or print the fabrics for decoration. The men do all sorts of things, ranging from the making of bricks and wheels to the artistic carving, colouring, and matting of walls and furniture.

For Katherine Mansfield that new life of hers is "far more truthful" and she writes her husband "she didn't want any more books just now of any kind" (48). She invites Murry to join her there, to leave all his intellectual interests behind and work for Gurdjieff — growing vegetables, playing the banjo, and dancing. Being summoned by her, Murry arrives at Fontainebleau on Tuesday afternoon, 9 January, 1923. He says he finds Katherine different, quiet "a being transfigured by love, absolutely secure of love" (49). After supper she feels uneasy and climbing up the stairs to her room, Katherine runs "ahead as a healthy person might, and something loosed the flood. At the top she began to cough... and blood came spurting from her mouth....She managed to say to Jack, 'I believe....I'm going to die'" (50). Murry takes her to the room and screams for help. After a few hours, despite the endeavours of two doctors who assisted her, our tired-out Katherine could finally close her brown eyes to peaceful sleep, even more peaceful than that she used to enjoy on her grandma's bed, as a child.

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CHAPTER II

KEZIA'S STORIES :

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

"I am stuck beyond words, and again it seems to me that what I am doing has **no form!** I ought to finish my book of **stories first** and then, when it's gone, really get down to my novel **Karori**"(Mansfield's **Journal**, Sep.1921).

The previous chapter shows that the time Katherine Mansfield spent in Karori was very significant for her and that she would portray it in Kezia's stories. At the age of four years and a half, Katherine was taken to "Chesney Wold," Karori, where her family stayed five years. The big house they lived in there supplied the setting for "The Little Girl," "Prelude," and "The Doll's House." Before analysing Kezia's stories themselves, it may be adequate to make some general considerations about them, to observe the correspondence between Kezia's and Mansfield's lives, the time the stories were written and their importance to Katherine Mansfield herself and to her artistic bulk.

This kind of analysis, as one may agree, depends a great deal on the biographical research, without dispensing with the psychological interpretation as well. The study of the writer's state of mind and her purposes on dealing repeatedly with certain themes(such as loneliness and rejection), her depiction of troubled minds and problematic social relationships(e.g. Linda's, Beryl's and Kezia's herself), along with her use of symbols, fantasy and dreams, furnish a vast field for the application of

the psychological mode here. When analysing Kezia's stories, therefore, especially the girl's and her mother's dreams, one may feel inclined to recur to Freud's theories in order to illuminate their meaning.

The name Kezia, Mansfield's biographer Antony Alpers suggests, was taken from the Bible. At Job 42:14 one reads that Keziah was the second daughter of Job. And the name Keziah is underlined in Mansfield's copy of the Bible, now kept in the Turnbull library, in Wellington. Mansfield's husband, John Middleton Murry, informs the reader that after the publication of *Bliss and Other Stories* in 1920 Katherine "began to receive many letters from simple people who loved her work, and above all, the child Kezia who appeared in it"(1). Thus, Kezia — that striking character the reader cannot forget easily — had already secured herself some ground, although the author had written at that time just two tales about her, "The Little Girl"(1912) and "Prelude"(1915).

But Kezia had been in Mansfield's mind and pen much earlier than that. When she was little Mansfield "possessed a wicked gift for impersonation"(2) and she liked to write sketches depicting the family life, which generated some conflict with the household members. In one of those sketches entitled "Kezia and Tui," the child calls her father 'Bottlenose,' (a term usually applied to a large, shapeless man). In "The Little Girl" Kezia says the same about her father, "He was so big — his hands and his neck, especially his mouth when he yawned. Thinking about him alone in the nursery was like thinking about a giant"(3).

In drawing sketches from her family, Alpers believes, it was natural for Mansfield to portray her own self and this she

did through the character of Kezia. Katherine's nickname was Kass and Alpers adds, "the child Kezia is Kass, of course"(4). It is not difficult to verify the truth of Alpers' words. In reading Mansfield's biography one finds interesting events which are also experienced by Kezia. That Kezia's stories reflect the author's own family can be evinced by the simple examination of the characters' names. The writer herself kept changing her own name. She used to sign Catharine, Katharina, Kass, Kathie Shönfeld, Kissienka. Originally named Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp, she decided to become Katherine Mansfield, for Mansfield was the name of her dear grandmother when single, Margaret Isabella Mansfield. Beauchamp, her father's name, was rejected but not altogether forgotten. Its translation into English — Fairfield — also somehow similar to Mansfield, was given to Kezia's grandmother, a dedicated person as loving as Mrs. Dyer — Mansfield's own grandmother.

Kezia's father is called Stanley after the author's other grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Stanley who married Arthur Beauchamp in 1854. Kezia's sisters are called Isabel, after her grandmother Margaret Isabella Mansfield, and Lottie — short for Charlotte, the real name of the writer's second sister. Her aunt Belle who joined the Beauchamps together with the grandmother and another aunt called Kitty, appears in Kezia's stories as Aunt Beryl — a belle and perilous damsel.

Burnell — the name of Kezia's family — was taken from the writer's mother's name Annie Burnell Dyer, and this was also the name of her baby sister Gwendoline Burnell Beauchamp who died in infancy in 1891. The correspondence between the two families — the Beauchamps and the Burnells — is even more

striking when one analyses the characters themselves and the events that comprise their lives. These aspects shall be examined in detail though within the study of the proper stories. For the moment it seems convenient to speculate the circumstances in which Kezia's stories were produced.

It was in 1912 that Katherine Mansfield wrote "The Little Girl" — the first of Kezia's stories. As the previous chapter indicates, 1912 was a year of both trials and triumphs in the author's life. She suffered the attacks from Orage and Beatrice Hastings because she had stopped contributing to their magazine *The New Age*, but she began living with Murry — a peaceful "married" life. The writing of "The Little Girl" together with another story set in Karori — "The Woman at the Store," a murder tale she wrote in the same year — proves that Mansfield was always reminiscing her distant land and people.

It was three years later that Katherine Mansfield, turning again her attention to little Kezia (an older child now), makes her act and observe the others do so in the pages of "Prelude." The story in many ways marks a turning point in Katherine Mansfield's production. First, it is the beginning of her mastery as a short story writer, heading, therefore, her best pieces. Second, it expresses her profound dedication to literature and her desire to write a novel. Third, it reveals her roots and ideas of love and truth. The story "Prelude" also introduced the final phase of the writer's career. The very title 'prelude' refers to a preliminary part — in Mansfield's case, an introduction to her mature work, the threshold of her valuable craftsmanship.

Albeit ironical and sad to acknowledge, "Prelude" is also related to the beginning of Mansfield's end, since it was in 1917

that the writer got very sick. "The gloom and depression and sunlessness of a London now completely under the shadow of the war" aggravated her poor health and "her pleurisy turned into consumption"(5). The painful disease was to torture her to the last days of her life in 1923. It was therefore accompanied by most suffering and anguish that Katherine produced her best works.

What the writer really meant by choosing the title 'prelude' is perhaps not difficult to tell. The story written in Paris in 1915 was first named "The Aloe"(referring to a big tree that has a symbolic function in the tale) and, as she herself declared and C. K. Stead registered, it was meant to be the first part of a novel(6). It is comprehensible that Katherine Mansfield nurtured the idea of writing a novel herself, for she was assisting the heyday of the modern novel. Murry was writing a novel called *Still Life*. She was also in close relationship with Lawrence who in 1915 was composing *The Rainbow*. She was likewise in contact with Huxley, Virginia Woolf and other novelists.

This is probably one of the reasons that made Katherine Mansfield keep the intended novel in a drawer, working on it now and then. Only two years later, in the summer of 1917, when asked by Virginia Woolf to have "The Aloe" published, did Mansfield rewrite parts of the story, make it shorter and change its name to "Prelude," evidently promising a continuation to her tale. So, "Prelude" "gave more trouble than anything else Katherine wrote — nothing else was worked on in three different years"(7). The account of its publication is equally unusual. The Woolfs received the story in June 1917 and released its first copies more than a year later, in July 1918.

The Middleton Murrys in 1918, then officially married, had looked forward to the success of "Prelude" among their literary friends, but they were frustrated. Staying apart from their friends, mainly because of Katherine's disease, Murry, on being requested by Lady Ottoline to write a review of Siegfried Sassoon's **Counter-Attack and Other Poems**, displeases everybody with his harsh criticism. He says that "Mr. Sassoon's war verses — they are not poetry — are such a cry. They touch not our imagination but our sense... Their effect is exhausted when the immediate impression dies away"(8). As a result, the Murrys were soon under attack. Letters were written in protest and gossips debasing Katherine's dignity were spread.

On those hard days when Sassoon, being in the front, was hurt in the head and Bertrand Russel was in prison for sedition, Mansfield's "Prelude" became a weapon of revenge in their hands. They all despised it and agreed with Russel who "thought it worthless"(9). Alpers adds that "for the little book called 'Prelude' there was no general enthusiasm, no body of allies ready to promote it, and no demand in the bookshops. Few review copies were sent out, and the papers hardly noticed it, for its appearance was unprofessional"(10).

Katherine's disappointment was crowned by two other blows: the death of her mother in Wellington in August and the general indifference to her now famous story "Bliss" published by **English Review** in the same month. These setbacks would not stop the writer's pen, though. Katherine knew she was in the right track. She was conscious she was doing a good job with both form and content and that she could do even better yet. It was in hectic speed that she worked now and the stories that flowed from

her pen, most of them set in Karori, are all filled with that sense of love and truth she succeeded in communicating to the world.

The urgency under which Katherine worked is explained by the threatening approach of the implacable enemy — the one called Death. The heavy hand of death had taken hold of the writer's ideas and behaviour. More than ever now she felt great love for people, even for those who once had scorned her. She forgave offences and sought reconciliation. In a letter to Kot(a friend who had forgotten her) she appreciatively writes about Lawrence, by whom she had been so maliciously outraged:

Wasn't Lawrence awfully nice that night. Ah, one must always love Lawrence for his "being." I could love Frieda too, tonight, in her Bavarian dress...It is a pity that all things must pass. And how strange it is, how in spite of everything, there are certain people, like Lawrence, who remain in one's life forever and others who are forever shadowy(11).

It was her lost friend Lawrence, perhaps, who caused her to write "At the Bay" — a continuation to "Prelude." On reading Lawrence's *Women in Love*, which had arrived at the Château Belle Vue to be reviewed by Murry, she lamented the kind of love Lawrence depicts in his novel, confiding in a letter to her friend Brett:

What makes Lawrence a real writer is his passion.... But Lawrence has got it all wrong, I believe....It's my belief that nothing will save the world but love. But his tortured, satanic demon love I think is all wrong(12).

The reading of Lawrence's book helped Katherine refresh her ideas concerning the sort of love she wanted to portray. It was, in her own words, "family love...warm, vivid, intimate

— not 'made-up — not self-conscious'(13). Her heart and mind, turning again to the beloved people in New Zealand, make her disclose another chapter of the Burnell family and she places them at the bay this time. In "At the Bay," not only Kezia, but all the other members of the family are involved with the task of loving and being loved, naturally meeting, in their endeavours, with both success and failure.

Unlike "Prelude" which took Mansfield about two years to remodel and eventually finish, "At the Bay" was completed in less than two months, from the end of July to 10 September 1921. When writing this story her idealized novel was again under way, she must have thought, for in September, as Alpers says, Katherine "plans a 'novel' to be called Karori"(14). Thus, "At the Bay" could have been the second chapter of her novel. To support this assertion there is the fact that Katherine interrupts the writing of "At the Bay" at least twice to compose two other stories probably due to her professional responsibilities and her need of money for her medical treatment. Hankering after a cure for her disease, she had been spending a lot of money lately, for "consumption is a terribly expensive illness," she told her father in a letter(15).

By this time, Mansfield's recognition as a short story writer had been established and the book **Bliss and Other Stories**, published in 1920, was bringing her some money. Editors were demanding her stories and one of them asked her to write a novel. She had a contract with the **Sphere** conducted by Clement Shorter who "had commissioned six short stories at ten guineas each, the highest pay she had ever known"(16). This contract however caused her more damage than benefit, for, working under pressure(not to

mention her delicate health) proved to be a hindrance to good performance. She was severely criticized for the literary pieces she contributed to the *Sphere*, among them "Mr. and Mrs. Dove" which Katherine herself acknowledged as being unsatisfactory, "not quite the kind of truth I'm after" (17).

Hence, interrupting "At the Bay" Mansfield writes "The Voyage" — a story that (had the writer had better physical and financial conditions), would have easily supplied a chapter for her Karori novel, since the setting and characters are quite the same as those presented in "At the Bay." Fenella, the central character in "The Voyage," is Kezia's double for different reasons. Like Kezia, Fenella is attentive, clever, quiet, reserved, and sensitive, having also a fantastic imagination. For her the luggage is a "strapped-up sausage." The whistle of the boat, "the cry of a cat." Striding on the dark Old Wharf to take the boat, she notices a lantern which for her "seemed afraid to unfurl its timid, quivering light in all that blackness; it burned softly, as if for itself" (18). The sight of the boat also strikes Fenella's fantasy and she fancies that "lying beside the dark wharf, all strung, all beaded with round golden lights, the Picton boat looked as if she was more ready to sail among stars than out into the cold sea" (19). In the child Kezia one can identify a similar cleverness and disposition towards fantasy. When in "Prelude" Kezia looks through the window of her house, she sees a coloured garden which strikes her sensitive imagination:

The dining-room window had a square of coloured glass at each corner. One was blue and one was yellow. Kezia bent down to have one more look at a blue lawn with blue arum lilies growing at the gate, and then at a yellow lawn with yellow lilies and a yellow fence. As she

looked a little Chinese Lottie came out on to the lawn and began to dust the tables and chairs with a corner of her pinafore. Was that really Lottie? Kezia was not quite sure until she had looked through the ordinary window (20).

Like Kezia (when left on the street to be picked up later) Fenella feels rejected and alone. Her mother is dead and father sends her away without an explanation or a word of comfort. Before leaving, the stern man, without looking at her, puts a shilling into the hand of the frightened girl and she desperately espies in his action an indication that "she must be going away for ever!" (21).

The theme for "The Voyage" (Mansfield began to write it on 11 August 1921) was probably drawn from the death of her own mother three years before, on 8 August 1918. Like Kezia (in "The Little Girl," when her mother and grandmother travel to see a doctor) and Fenella (when sent away by her father), Katherine herself was feeling alone and forgotten. Because of her illness she had to stay in the South of France while her husband worked in London. Her loneliness and perchance revolt against her husband furnish the theme for the other piece she then writes — "A Married Man's Story" — a tale she leaves unfinished, though. In this story she portrays a writer who shares a dull, meaningless life with his wife and baby son, to whom he feels no love, admitting that he has never accepted him as theirs (22). But he does not love his wife either. He confesses they had been happy once, when they first married, but then the baby came to spoil their good relationship.

Katherine, in "A Married Man's Story," was perhaps representing her own marriage, spoiled by the arrival of her

disease. Tuberculosis at the time "was taking 1.000 lives a week," being in itself a cause to separate husband and wife(23). Unlike most of the other works she wrote at this period, "A Married Man's Story" is told in the first person and the narrator — the married man — can be identified now with Murry, and now with Katherine herself, especially when he talks about his past. He recalls the unhappy childhood he partakes with a sick mother and a hostile father whom he fears, and the trials he faces at school where he is disliked — something identical to Kezia's and Katherine's experiences.

Mansfield had certainly plunged into her own past. After completing "At the Bay" on September 10, 1921, she writes in the following month "The Garden Party" and "The Doll's House," revealing in them episodes she had taken part in when an adolescent and a child, respectively. In "The Garden Party" Katherine introduces another of Kezia's doubles in the portrayal of Laura Sheridan. Like Kezia in "The Doll's House," Laura is against social barriers and her family's contempt towards the poor neighbours. On hearing that a young carter (the father of five children who lived nearby) had accidentally died while working, Laura wants to cancel their garden party, finding however no support or understanding in her mother and sisters. The same kind of conflict is faced by little Kezia when forbidden to show the poor girls at school her beautiful doll's house.

Katherine Mansfield's insistence on portraying the character of Kezia and her doubles, together with the similarities detached between the Burnells and the Beauchamps (slightly treated heretofore), can assure one that Kezia's stories are indeed preeminent samples among the author's works. Besides their

undeniable value in form and content, the autobiographical respect impresses any one who gets acquainted with these stories and the life of the writer. It might not be hazardous to state that Kezia's accounts can stand as self-revelation — the retraction of a soul that (from infancy) was confronted with hostility and lack of understanding, for this is what one can see in detail when perusing the stories proper.

II. 1. "The Little Girl"

"The only adorable thing I can imagine is for my grandmother to put me to bed and bring me a bowl of hot bread and milk, and standing with her hand folded, the left over the right, say in her adorable voice, 'There, darling, isn't that nice?' To wake later and find her turning down the bed-clothes to see if my feet were cold, and wrapping them in a little pink singlet, softer than cat's fur...Alas!" (Mantz's *The Life of K. Mansfield*, p.69).

From the beginning of the story one can see that Kezia — here a girl of about six years old — has a troubled life: a life full of fears and instability. The first paragraph is very relevant to the story since it provides the reader with some basic information about the two main characters — Kezia and her father. The way they relate is revealed by the tone of the story which prepares the reader to digest a sad account about a young girl who fears her father, avoids him, and feels relieved when he sets out for work every morning. Another important element in "The Little Girl" is Mansfield's use of fantasy — something found in her stories in a variety of forms (24). Fantasy in "The Little Girl" (though not developed as much as it is in other stories about Kezia) functions as a key to close the story, changing somehow the attitude of the frightened child.

Little Kezia is afraid of her father because he is never friendly to her. He has no time for her, no affection. It is true that he does not forget to kiss her every morning, but it is only a superficial kiss, in which the girl finds no pleasure. And besides, "he is so big!" His loud voice is always demanding something, complaining about everything, scolding her for nothing, as in, "'What's the matter? What are you looking so wretched about? Mother, I wish you could teach this child not to appear on the brink of suicide"(25). Kezia is so scared in her father's presence that she cannot even talk properly. To his great anger, she stammers when speaking to him, something unusual when she talks to other people.

Kezia's mother is a remote lady, even more distant from the child than her husband himself. She has never taken care of Kezia, leaving her entirely in the hands of her mother who loves the girl dearly. The grandmother would do anything to make the girl happy. She is always eager to help her, to answer her questions, to listen to her stories, and to provide her with all her material and emotional needs. Yet, the girl does suffer from the lack of parental love. She observes her neighbours — the Macdonalds — and sees that life in their house is different:

Looking through a hole in the vegetable garden fence the little girl saw them playing "tag" in the evening. The father with the baby Mac on his shoulders, two little girls hanging on to his coat tails, ran round and round the flower beds, shaking with laughter(26).

Why cannot her father be like that? How wonderful if she could talk to her mother, kiss her pretty face, run to her father and be taken up in his arms!, Kezia must reason. But the girl knows she cannot do such things.

Trying to help Kezia the grandmother suggests she could make her father a pincushion — a present for his birthday. The girl is looking forward to the opportunity to please the tough man. She gets a piece of yellow silk and artfully stitches three of its sides, leaving one open for the stuffing.

But what to fill it with?... The grandmother was out in the garden, and she wandered into the mother's bedroom to look for 'scraps.' On the bed table she discovered a great many sheets of fine paper, gathered them up, shredded them into tiny pieces, and stuffed her case, then sewed up the fourth side(27).

The innocent child was totally unaware that those sheets of paper contained her father's business talk — the speech he was to deliver for the Port Authority. That same evening he misses his treasure and raises a wild uproar in the house. The little girl cannot understand what is happening or why her father is in such a rage. On being asked about the papers though, she earnestly replies, "Oh, yes. I tore them up for my s'prise"(28). The father, finding support in the mother's indifference, gives no importance to the explanation the grandmother presents, and little Kezia is whipped savagely.

But one day, her mother being sick travels with grandmother to see a doctor. Little Kezia is left alone with Alice, the girl servant. She had never slept by herself before. The grandmother usually took the girl to her own bed, in the middle of the night, for the child often had nightmares and screamed in her sleep. That night Kezia is afraid the old frightening dream may threaten her again and it does come as soon as she catches sleep:

The butcher with a knife and a rope who grew nearer, smiling that dreadful smile, while she could not move,

could only stand still, crying out, "Grandma, Grandma!" She woke shivering to see father beside her bed, a candle in his hand.

'What's the matter?' he said.

'Oh, a butcher — a knife — I want grannie.' He blew out the candle, bent down, and caught up the child in his arms, carrying her along the passage to the big room(29).

Kezia is much surprised with her father's act. And she is comforted, too. Lying beside him on his bed she does not mind the dark, she is not afraid any longer. As her father sleeps, Kezia begins to analyse his action, and something new invades her mind. She is suddenly taken by a strong emotion, a flow of wisdom that offers her explanations and reasonings she had never conceived before. Kezia receives a sort of revelation that makes her understand her father, realise that he loves her, that he is only too busy to play with her.

Poor father! Not so big after all — and with no one to look after him.... And every day he had to work and was too tired to be a Mr. Macdonald.... She had torn up all his beautiful writing...(30)

It is the father's sudden behaviour that feeds Kezia's fantasy and brings the child hope and consolation. As Agostino Gemelli says in his book "Psicologia da Idade Evolutiva," "um dado sensorial, uma palavra, um objeto, um movimento pode despertar toda uma cadeia de representações unidas entre si nos mais variados modos da fantasia"(31). That is what one sees in Kezia's experience here. The girl feels happy now. Her father's demeanor makes her believe she has found a new friend, a loving father to rely on.

Gemelli explains that the play activity and the exercise of fantasy are interlinked practices. The little child takes

fantasy as a toy and plays with it naturally. He does not distinguish fantasy from reality, not perceiving then that his fancies do not correspond to the real facts around him, for he lacks critical judgement which comes only with age(32). Therefore, fantasy for the child is an extension of reality, being painted with the same colours of the latter. If the real situation is gay and exciting, fantasy will likewise have the same zest. On the other hand, if the child is afflicted with problems, his imagination will be filled with grief and distress.

This is what one can observe in Mansfield's "The Little Girl." Because of her father's unfriendliness, Kezia calls him a brute, exaggerating perhaps his rude manners. The child's mood varies according to the circumstances around her. Waiting in her room for her father's punishment, for example, the girl sees sorrow everywhere, as she watches "the evening light sift through the venetian blinds and trace a sad little pattern on the floor"(33). However, the moment the father takes her in his arms (saving her from a terrifying dream), and puts her on his bed (giving her security), she beholds him with different eyes. Instead of a brute, he is now an angel and she regards him with tenderness.

Now, regarding Kezia's attitude with Freudian eyes, one could see something more in the girl's happiness here. According to Freud, all dreams are the fulfillment of a desire(34). Kezia's frightening dream with the butcher often brought her a compensation: she was taken to her grandmother's bed. That night, however, knowing that her grannie was absent, the girl unconsciously(Freud sustains "that most of the individual's mental processes are unconscious"(35) decides to appeal to her

father. Kezia wants to call the attention of the man she fears, but at the same time loves too, as the case of the pincushion testifies, she had intended to please him when she made him that birthday present.

How gratifying has the dream proved to be then! Kezia is not only taken in her father's arms, but also allowed to share his bed. "He lay down beside her. Half asleep still, still with the butcher's smile all about her, it seemed, she crept close to him, snuggled her head under his arm, held tightly to his pyjama jacket" (36). Can Kezia's attitude here be instanced as illustration of the Oedipus complex (or the sexual wishes of a little girl toward her father) as Freud conceived it? The answer is probably no, for Freud detected the Oedipian complex mainly in boys, as he explains the phenomenon in *The Ego and the Id* (W.W. Norton, 1962, pp. 21-22):

... the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships [the child's devotion to his mother and identification with his father] proceed side by side, until the boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an

obstacle to them; from this the Oedipus complex originates. His identification with his father then takes on a hostile colouring and changes into a wish to get rid of his father in order to take his place with his mother.

Henceforward his relation to his father is ambivalent; it seems as if the ambivalence inherent in the identification from the beginning had become manifest. An ambivalent attitude to his father and an object-relation of a solely affectionate kind to his mother make up the content of the simple positive Oedipus complex in a boy (37).

It is true that Freud also conceived the possibility of a girl developing sexual wishes towards her father, being the girl then driven to her father to compensate for the lack of maternal affection.

Since Kezia had no affection from either of her parents, it seems natural to believe that she would not nurture any special love for any of them. The story emphasizes her fear toward her father.

Perhaps Kezia saw in the big, threatening butcher the image of her own father. That is probably why she feared the butcher so much. When in her innocence Kezia asked her grandmother, "What did Jesus make fathers for? (38), she was expressing her belief that she could live better without him.

It was only when the father gave her that attention she so much needed, that Kezia, using her fantasy exaggerated the importance of his deed and felt happy.

In fact, as Cherry Hankin says, it is fatasy "that characterizes the conclusion of many of Katherine Mansfield's stories" (39), and it seems logical to include "The Little Girl" in this category, though admitting that fantasy here is only slightly employed, in comparison with other stories. This is due, perhaps, to the fact that Mansfield gives a special treatment to Kezia, proving her less dreamy than some of the other characters.

The writer without doubt, wants the reader to understand that Kezia, even when very small was able to control her feelings better than most adults in her family, as one can see in the analysis of "Prelude", the following story she writes about Kezia.

So, one can regard "The Little Girl" as an introduction to "Prelude" for in this story

Kezia is older and therefore more competent to observe the others act and learn from their mannerisms. The fears and instability she felt in "The Little Girl" give place to a more secure stance she demonstrates to possess in "Prelude", despite the fact that in this latter piece Kezia continues to play the role of the rejected child.

II. 2. "Prelude"

"I found "The Aloe"¹ this morning...
The Aloe" is right. "The Aloe" is lovely. It simply fascinates me, and I know that it is what you would wish me to write. And now I know what the last chapter is. It is your birth __ your coming in the autumn. You in Grandmother's arms under the tree, your solemnity, your wonderful beauty... That chapter will end the book. The next book will be yours and mine. And you must mean the world to Linda; and before ever you are born Kezia must play with you __ her little Bogey. Oh, Bogey __ I must hurry. All of them must have this book. It is good, my treasure! My little brother, is is good, and it is what we really meant". (Mansfield's Journal, Feb. 16, 1916)

Kezia's rejection is explicitly presented in "Prelude". When the story opens the family is moving from the city to the country and Kezia is left behind for there was no place for her in the buggy. Later, on arriving the new house, her mother

1. "The Aloe" was revised and published under the title "Prelude".

does not even look at her, just saying, "'Are those the children?' But Linda did not really care; she did not even open her eyes to see"(40). The father who is voraciously eating when she arrives with Lottie, fails to acknowledge their presence. The only indication he gives of noticing their arrival is his concern with the carter, to whom he orders something to be served in the kitchen.

Kezia's trip to the country can be seen as a voyage of self-discovery, the beginning of her maturity. Though Ann L. MacLaughlin affirms that "in 'Prelude' Kezia, a nine-year-old girl, begins to move from the security of childhood toward the anxieties of adult world"(41), it is evident that things happen to Kezia in a divergent order. The insecurity she was subject to when younger — as shown in the previous story — recedes as she grows older. Thus, the title 'prelude' may refer to the beginning of Kezia's awareness; her rationalization of the tumultuous environment she lives in and of her need to adjust, as well as to the formation of her adamant character.

The story presents several facets of family life, having perhaps, as its principal theme, marriage and its consequences. This theme is especially manifested through the characters of Beryl Fairfield and Linda Burnell. These two women's attitude and inclination to fantasy are vividly contrasted with the sober personality of Mrs. Fairfield(Kezia's grandmother) whose unswerving demeanor guarantees not only the balance and harmony of the household, but Kezia's safe development too.

Although Kezia is oftentimes outside the focus of the writer's camera, she is certainly the central character, for the reader feels that the observant girl is always in the background,

not missing any important detail in the story. As in "The Little Girl," it is the grandmother who takes care of the children and of everything else in the house. Here she is helped by the same girl servant, Alice, and by aunt Beryl — her pretty younger daughter. When the grandmother brings Kezia and Lottie bread and milk, Isabel (their proud elder sister who had deserved a nice place in the buggy) keeps teasing them saying that she had had meat for supper. Kezia does not say a word, but she surely observes everything, noticing Isabel's malice and Aunt Beryl's bitter remark as the girl first enters the room, "Put down the lamp, Kezia, or we shall have the house on fire before we are out of the packing cases" (42). The grandmother had trusted Kezia the lamp, for Lottie, being too sleepy, had to be carried in the woman's arms.

Kezia's apparent aloofness is her response to that treatment she abhors. When among her relatives she feels awkward, as though they were strangers to her. She felt the same way when in the presence of the Samuel Josephs, the misbehaved neighbours she had been left with that morning. Moses had ridiculed her, to the hilarious excitement of his brothers, by making her choose to eat strawberries and cream, when they just had bread and dripping to offer her. But Kezia would not cry before them. When "a tear rolled down her cheek... she caught it with a neat little whisk of her tongue and ate it before any of them had seen" (43). The strong, dignified girl could also be talkative and extroverted when with people she loved and trusted, as one witnesses her talking with the carter during the trip.

Also, as the story shows later, Kezia gets along with her cousins very well too. Pip and Rags Trout live near the Burnells'

house and they usually come down to play with the girls. It is interesting to observe the way Mansfield describes their play: now they are adults, husbands or wives, involved in the usual responsibilities of providing food for the family and caring about small children; now they are kids again and they shout and argue: speaking simultaneously they disagree concerning the kind of play one of them has chosen, and they complain and tease one another.

One day, in the middle of their play, the children are suddenly interrupted by Pat, the servant man, who invites them to watch the slaughter of a duck. The children cannot believe his words, for they had never seen anything like that before, but, driven by curiosity and by the stories of Irish kings Pat tells them, they follow him. Pip Trout, for being an older boy, is the only child to have an idea of what is coming up. He seizes the opportunity to tie a dirty handkerchief around his dog's head(something he loves to do) "because the sight of blood makes him awfully wild," Pip says(44).

As they get to the fowl-house, Pat skillfully calls the ducks while he feeds them. The fowls surround the man in a white circle. Pat easily grasps two of them, giving one to brave Pip to hold while the other he throws across an old stump that lay there and swiftly — before any of the frightened children could speak — he chops its head off with his tomahawk. The spurt of blood paralyzes the children for a second. Soon afterwards they begin to scream in excitement: "The blood! The blood....I saw it," Pip yells(45). Even little Lottie shouts, "Look, Kezia, look!" But Kezia hates the scene. The blood darkening the duck's feathers and Pat's hands might remind her of the terrifying

butcher she used to see in her dreams. Besides, the sight of the lifeless duck (which but a minute ago walked so gracefully) is too much for her. Kezia bursts into tears and, getting hold of Pat's legs, she screams, "Put head back! Put head back!" (46) That is Kezia's first contact with death. Trying to comfort her, Pat puts the girl in his arms and, burying her face in his shoulder, she embraces him tightly. The shocking feeling, however, does not last long. As Kezia touches Pat's ear she notices with surprise that the man wears ear-rings. Her big discovery coupled with Pat's display of affection make the girl forget all about the dead duck, for, due to her amiable disposition, she is easily won by friendly people.

Kezia is especially affectionate towards her grandmother. On being put to bed she kisses the good woman and, knowing they will have no sheets that night, her imagination immediately helps her face that challenge. She says, "It's tickly, but it's like Indians. Come to bed soon and be my Indian brave" (47). Lying on her grandmother's bed she fancies that "outside the window hundreds of black cats with yellow eyes sat in the sky watching her — but she was not frightened" (48).

Kezia's assurance — nursed by the grandmother's strong, leading hand — is being developed. Even the fantasies that feed her fertile imagination are rooted upon realistic elements around her (such as sound), as in the following example:

In the garden some tiny owls, perched on the branches of a lace bark tree, called: "More pork; more pork." And far away in the bush there sounded a harsh rapid chatter: "Ha-ha-ha...Ha-ha-ha" (49).

Katherine Mansfield used fantasy at large. Studying her

use of fantasy Cherry Hankin says,

Katherine Mansfield's gift, in her finest writing, is an ability to focus upon a situation in which the illusions and fantasies of her fictional characters echo those of ordinary human beings(50).

Hankin shows that Mansfield's adolescent works, such as "His Ideal," "Die Einsame," and "My Potplants" — the first written in 1903 and the latter two in 1904 — were pieces of 'pure fantasy.' And Hankin adds,

Katherine Mansfield continued to write about the conflict between fantasy and reality until the end of her life; and I would venture to suggest that it was because this subject sprang directly from her own earliest and deepest imaginative experiences that she was able to portray it with such emotional conviction(51).

So, Katherine did not restrict her use of fantasy to close her stories as in "The Little Girl," but throughout them one perceives that her characters(no matter children or adults) are inclined to enter the world of fantasy, as in the case of Aunt Beryl and Linda Burnell. Different from little Kezia's fantasy, Beryl's(for example) is thoroughly artificial, detached from reality and always delightful. Being an adult, Beryl is hardly ever content with the real events about her, and, anxious to escape to a better surrounding, she resorts to fantasy.

That first night in the country, as she takes off her clothes to go to bed Beryl, looking through the open window, listlessly plays with fantasy and reality:

...somewhere out there in the garden a young man, dark and slender, with mocking eyes, tiptoed among the bushes, and gathered the flowers into a big bouquet, and slipped under her window and held it up to her...(52)

Beryl turns from the window and falling back into reality thinks of Kezia's father, "How frightfully unreasonable Stanley is sometimes...ah, if only she had money of her own" (53). The thought of money functions as a springboard for her and she immediately returns to her fantastic world. Certain of her physical beauty and of her impossibility to acquire money to gain her freedom, she imagines that a wealthy man has come to rescue her.

In Beryl's case it is dissatisfaction and desire to escape and get married that make her daydream and fantasize. Living with her sister has been trying for her. Linda's husband is demanding and bad-tempered. Stanley knows how to be a boss. He is very severe concerning his likes and dislikes, what makes everybody in the house eager to please him to avoid embarrassment. Kezia's father is very stingy, too. Talking about the new house he says, "The thing that pleases me... is that I've got the place dirt cheap... of course we shall go very slow and cut down expenses as fine as possible" (54).

Katherine Mansfield was certainly portraying here something she disapproved of in her own father. Like Stanley, Harold Beauchamp was very careful with his family's expenditures. Her mother, Alpers says, "Annie,... a woman who undoubtedly loved her husband, but who dreaded the monthly sessions when she had to sit beside him at the dining-room table and go through all the household bills, accounting for every threepence" (55).

It is interesting that this very scene should be depicted in another story — "New Dresses" — where Henry Carsfield obliges his tired wife Anne (Annie's foil) to sit down to go over the draper's bill, when he discovers she had been making some new

dresses for their girls. Seeing the figure he reacts furiously, "'Do you mean to tell me,' stormed Henry, 'that lot over there cost thirty-five shillings... Good God! Anybody would think you'd married a millionaire'" (56).

The characters in "New Dresses" behave in much the same way as the ones in Kezia's stories. Even another of Kezia's doubles is found there hidden under the name of Helen Carsfield. Like Kezia, Helen is not loved by her parents who consider her disobedient and careless, in comparison with her nice sister Rose (Isabel's foil). Her father even scolds her in front of visitors when she has done nothing wrong. To illustrate: One day, as she approaches the family doctor who likes her very much, Mr. Carsfield darts, "Leave off worrying Doctor Malcolm, Helen. You mustn't be a plague to people who are not members of your own family" (57). Because of being constantly misjudged Helen acquires the bad habit of telling lies when afflicted by her parents, and, like Kezia, she stammers, something they hate in her.

Mr. Carsfield is very similar to tameless Stanley Burnell in "Prelude," whom Beryl longs to get rid of — not to mention her great desire to find a nice man and marry him. Realising her chances have become rather remote in the country (where they live now), Beryl feels extremely unhappy, nervous, sensitive and dreamy. Busy with her thoughts she does not perceive that, right under her nose, her sister Linda — who has conquered a rich husband and owns all the material possessions Beryl considers desirable — is not happy either.

Katherine Mansfield shows here the irony of life: the paradoxical heart of us humans who are neither satisfied with

what we are nor with what we have. In the case of the two sisters here, the marriage tie exerts a tremendous magnetism upon their lives, presenting nevertheless, deviant forces. While Beryl, standing on one side, craves to enter into the state of matrimony, Linda, on the other hand, hates her role as a wife and strives to escape from her marriage responsibilities. The mischievous drama lived by the two women occupies their mind and heart, making them selfish and indifferent to the interests of the people around them. Consequently they feel isolated and, having nobody to confide their complaints and longings, they find a lenient pastime in fantasy.

As in the case of Beryl, the causes of Linda Burnell's fantasy are again dissatisfaction and a desire to escape. Linda cannot deny she loves her husband. She acknowledges his fervent dedication to her and admires his industrious disposition. She even understands and tries to justify his bad temper, saying that he is a simple, good man. Notwithstanding that, the role of the pacifier she has assumed (being always ready to calm him down, to shut his angry mouth with her sweet words and blandishments) seldom seems rewarding to her. When peace is finally restored in the house she cannot help bearing him a bit of grudge which, added to previous disappointments, makes her life miserable.

But what really disturbs Kezia's mother are her fears of sexuality and the ghost-like terror of childbearing. Linda is constantly dominated by her neurotic thoughts which threaten her even when she is asleep. Once she dreamed she was with her father and he would give her a little bird. As she caressed it on the head, the bird began to swell and grow. Then it looked and smiled at her slyly. Suddenly the bird had turned into a strange baby,

"with a big naked head and a gaping bird-mouth, opening and shutting" (58). Her father, before her astonished eyes, began to laugh noisily and she woke up.

It is interesting to notice that Linda's dream is in a way similar to the thoughts that people her mind all day long. Everything around her: the furniture, the curtains, the medicine bottles (in Linda's imagination) acquire life and move and grow and laugh at her threateningly, while she feels impotent to face them. "THEY knew how frightened she was; THEY saw how she turned her head away as she passed the mirror. What Linda always felt was that THEY wanted something of her, and she knew that if she gave herself up and was quiet, more than quiet, silent, motionless, something would really happen" (59).

Linda's terrifying experience here reminds one of Kezia's in the same story, when she is alone in her abandoned house.

As she stood there, the day flickered out and dark came. With the dark crept the wind snuffling and howling... Kezia was suddenly quite, quite still.... She was frightened. She wanted to call Lottie and to go on calling all the while she ran downstairs and out of the house. But IT was just behind her, waiting at the door, at the head of the stairs, at the bottom of the stairs, hiding in the passage, ready to dart out at the back door (60).

Kezia's fears seem natural to a child when found by herself in a deserted big house. Her mother's, however, are proper of a disturbed mind and, as Freud might have agreed, they are rooted in sexuality. The things growing (including the bird in the dream) may represent the male organs and her own state of pregnancy. When they laugh at her, they are probably making fun of her female bondage, once to her father and presently to her husband.

Linda's dream with the bird was probably originated from

the singing of the birds that celebrated dawn outside her room, for, as Freud says, the sleeping mind is easily affected by exterior noise(61). And it was certainly the rattling of the Venetian blind being pulled up by Burnell(transfigured in the dream as her father's "loud clattering laugh") that woke her up.

Concerning the meaning of the dream in terms of Freud's fulfillment of a desire, one could think that Linda's dream expresses her revolt against pregnancy and painful delivery, and her desire to make matters easier. She would rather receive the baby('the darling,' in her words) from the hands of a friend, or even perhaps, from a stork! Idle as she is, and weak as she feels, that kind of baby-coming would be comfortable and ideal.

Of course it requires a diseased mind to conceive such thoughts. Linda's idleness lends wings to dissatisfaction and even in the trees of the garden she sees an extension of her dilemma. The big aloe with its "curving leaves that seemed to be hiding something,"(62) reminded Linda of her withered heart which could never express the truth it concealed. When Kezia asks her about the aloe, Linda does not see in the girl's question an opportunity to communicate, to teach the child something, to satisfy her curiosity. On the contrary, Linda, distilling her bitterness, says that the tree flowers "once every hundred years"(63). What she might mean to say is that she is not so fortunate, since she has to give birth to a child almost every year.

The aloe in the garden attracts Kezia's mother frantically. She likes it "more than anything" there and once she dreams the tree is a ship inside which she is put after being rescued from cold water. The ship takes her faraway from her place and, as

she goes as though flying over the top of the trees, she urges the ones in the ship to row faster. Linda's dream is quite real for her. Later on, when taking a walk in the garden with her mother, Linda looks at the aloe bathed in moonlight and says to herself "She particularly liked the long sharp horns.... Nobody would dare to come near the ship or to follow after.... Not even my Newfoundland dog, that I'm so fond of in the daytime"(64).

Linda's dream with the ship (like her previous dream) has everything to do with her sexual obsession, one may think. The ship's lifted oars and budding mast, as well as its long thorns, in Freud's view, are male symbols(65). The ship, on its turn, is a female symbol, Freud says. Why, one may ask, does Linda want to run away from her 'Newfoundland dog', the husband she is fond of? Does he not love her dearly? He does! The story says Linda's husband is much in love with her and the woman often corresponds to his love, but it also shows he has some apprehensions concerning her feelings. Perhaps Burnell does not know how to please Linda. Perhaps he is usually too eager to gratify his own libido and forgets to wait for her. Consequently she becomes angry, revolted, and sick. Linda's dream, therefore, fulfills her desire of escaping — not from her husband literally — but from that terrible situation she cannot confide to anybody, not even to her mother beside her.

How differently has Mrs. Fairfield regarded the same tree! She had been looking at it, associating its flowering with the crop the garden might yield that year to provide plenty of food for the family. While Linda daydreams, considering the aloe a ship that would rescue her and set her free, her mother is engaged with practical thoughts which she naturally externalizes,

There are splendid healthy currant bushes in the vegetable garden. I noticed them today. I should like to see those pantry shelves thoroughly well stocked with our own jam....(66)

Mrs. Fairfield's practicality and loving concern for the others catch Kezia's attention, making her admire the old woman — so complete in contrast to her weak mother.

Linda feels not only weak but abused by a strong man who — not satisfied with the three girls she has given him — incontinently demands a son. As it was already shown, Linda thinks of her husband as a "Newfoundland dog" that would "jump at her so, and bark so loudly, and watch her with such eager, loving eyes... she had always hated things that rush at her, from a child" (67).

Something similar to this is said by Kezia to the carter during their trip to the country. One wonders whether the girl was merely repeating her mother's words or displaying a common trace between them. But what might be true is that Kezia has the habit of observing Linda and the other people in the family. She must find it queer that her mother does not undertake her responsibilities in the house, and that she hangs around all day long, doing nothing — while her old grandmother works hard.

Kezia is obviously aware of her mother's musings, not failing to notice the oddities of Aunt Beryl's as well. That is possibly why her aunt is always scolding her, as one can see in the reading of "At the Bay" and "The Doll's House." Beryl is probably jealous of Kezia's balance, courage and truthfulness, because she is perfectly conscious of her own insecurity and hypocrisy. Beryl is always trying to hide her genuine personality, making pronouncements that do not accord with her beliefs, acting

against her will. She acknowledges her falsehood and feels miserable, as she declares towards the end of the story:

How despicable! Despicable! Her heart was cold with rage. "It's marvellous how you keep it up," said she to the false self. But then it was only because she was so miserable — so miserable. If she had been happy and leading her own life, her false life would cease to be. She saw the real Beryl — a shadow...a shadow(68)

In "At the Bay," the story to be examined next, one will see that Beryl gradually proceeds to acquire a cynical conduct that eventually leads her to degradation(finally exposed in "The Doll's House"), whereas Kezia — embracing her grandmother's exemplary attitude, as she simultaneously casts off her other relatives' pattern — becomes immune to negative influence.

II. 3. "At the Bay"

"I've just finished my new book...The title is **At the Bay**. That's the name of the very long story in it — a continuation of "Prelude." It's about 60 pages. I've been at it all last night. My precious children have sat in here, playing cards. I've wandered about all sorts of places — in and out — I hope it is good. It is as good as I can do, and all my heart and soul is in it...every single bit. Oh God, I hope it gives pleasure to someone...

It is so strange to bring the dead to life again. There's my Grandmother, back in her chair with her pink knitting, there stalks my uncle over the grass; I feel as I write, 'You are not dead, my darlings. All is remembered. I bow down to you. I efface myself so that you may live again through me in your richness and beauty'"(Mansfield's letter to D. Brett, Sep. 1921).

Very early morning. The sun was not yet risen, and the whole of Crescent Bay was hidden under a white sea-mist.... A heavy dew had fallen. The grass was blue. Big drops hung on the bushes and just did not fall; the silvery, fluffy toi-toi was limp on its long stalks, and all the marigolds and the pinks in the bungalow gardens were bowed to the earth with wetness.

Ah-Aah! sounded the sleepy sea(69).

These are the opening words in "At the Bay." In fact it is mainly the poetical drawing of setting throughout the story

(providing a frame to it and definitely influencing the mood of the characters) that makes the tale different from "Prelude," for, as stated before, "At the Bay" is a sequel to "Prelude." Another different aspect between the two stories is the fictional time which is shorter in "At the Bay." It covers a day in a summer colony where the family are obviously spending their vacation. It takes place about a year afterwards because now the long-desired boy has been born and his presence has somehow soothed the heart of his mother who, in the long run, displays a new attitude towards life. Aunt Beryl, on the contrary (though ultimately resisting temptation), becomes more and more restless. Kezia, nevertheless — shrewdly observing every one — progresses in refinement as she tries to follow her grandmother's moral virtues.

Coupled with the great importance of setting, the portrayal of character is by no means a less significant element in "At the Bay," provided that it emphasizes the different deeds and reactions of each member of the family. Stanley Burnell — the prosperous businessman — is the first character to have the writer's attention. Thinking that everybody else is still in bed, the proud man boasts himself to be the first one to enjoy the matinal swim in the tepid seawater. To his disappointment his wife's brother-in-law is already there. With his simple, friendly talk, Jonathan exasperates Burnell who abruptly interrupts him, saying, "Look here, Trout,... I've no time to-to-to fool about... I'm in a hurry. I've work to do this morning — see?" (70)

For Burnell the incident is bad enough to spoil his lovely morning. But in the house Beryl (already giving evidence of a rebellious attitude) does not serve him his breakfast as she used to do and, to make matters worse, nobody can find his

walking stick. Restraining his bitter anger, Stanley sets out for work reading in Beryl's smile the relief his departure means to the women he leaves behind.

Beryl's ironic smile is just one expression of the manifold feelings that boil in her bosom. In "At the Bay" her main conflict resides in her desire for freedom and sexuality. Influenced by a new friend (an odd woman whose husband is likewise suspicious), Beryl "wants some one who will find the Beryl they none of them [her friends and relatives] know, who will expect her to be that Beryl always. She wants a lover" (71). Mrs. Kember's unforgettable words, "Oh, go on! Don't be a prude, my dear. You enjoy yourself while you're young. That's my advice," (72) aroused in her a compelling yearning for adventurous love. On the other hand, her mother does not fail to pull Beryl by the other side of the rope, imposing on her those moral principles she had been taught from infancy.

Therefore, Beryl is drastically divided. She "felt that she was being poisoned by this cold woman [Mrs. Kember], but she longed to hear" (73). She certainly encourages Mr. Kember's audacity for he goes to her window late at night and invites her out for a walk. On his arrival he finds Beryl involved in an aura of fantasy, having a passionate talk with an imaginary lover to whom she whispers,

Take me away from all these other people, my love. Let us go far away. Let us live our life, all new, all ours, from the very beginning. Let us make our fire. Let us sit down to eat together. Let us have long talks at night (74).

As Mr. Kember addresses Beryl, the dreamy young lady imagines for a while that the man standing outside has appeared to make

her dream come true and she agrees to follow him. At the last moment however, when he takes her hand and shows her the fuchsia bush — a propitious spot for their rendezvous — Beryl's moral instincts prevail and she escapes from him. The physical presence of that man with his devilish smile calls Beryl to reality and makes her change her mind and feel safe.

Something similar occurs to Beryl's sister, Linda. It is the presence of a male child — an angelical baby — that helps Linda Burnell change her views and feel better. In "Prelude" it was seen that Linda developed a neurotic attitude, mainly because she felt abused by a nice husband and because she could not love her children. In "At the Bay," however, something new happens: she has given birth to a boy making her husband immensely happy and proud. Besides, the contagious smile of that special child awakes her maternal feelings and Linda realises she still has love to give.

The unexpected realisation moves her to tears and the once tormented mother feels relieved. Now the garden around her has a different profile. In "Prelude" she had regarded the 'aloe as a means of escape — a ship which would take her away from those people who threatened her mercilessly. But now Linda is peacefully "walking up and down the grass, stopping to pick off a dead pink or give a top-heavy carnation something to lean against, or to take a deep breath of something, and then walking on again, with her little air of remoteness" (75).

Suddenly there appears a man — another male presence; a gentleman — to seal Linda's change by confiding his misfortune to her. Katherine Mansfield is again showing the paradoxical side of life: the very anxieties of a person can function as a

solace to another. Jonathan Trout's confession(that he hates his job in the office; that it makes him feel like a prisoner who has no hope of liberation; that he cannot just leave it for the sake of his children) consoles Linda, making her see that she is not the only victim of social constraints, but that other people too — even talented persons like her brother-in-law — were compelled to live the kind of life they loathed. Forgetting her own adversities(logically minimized by Jonathan's) Linda shows interest in the man's mishap and kindly gives him an attentive ear. Like Beryl she becomes sensible and attached to the moral principles she had quite forgotten.

Then, perceiving the approach of evening, Linda turns her eyes to the setting sun which she so much admired but equally feared, for its fiery grandeur always reminded her of God's wrath against His disobedient people. That day however, everything looked different,

...to-night it seemed to Linda there was something infinitely joyful and loving in those silver beams. And now no sound came from the sea. It breathed softly as if it would draw that tender, joyful beauty into its own bosom(76).

Linda's heart is filled by that majestic atmosphere. It beats harmoniously as it radiates peace to the whole body and Linda feels refreshed and serene.

Sometime before that, when the sun was still high up, Kezia in her grandmother's room watched the old woman's semblance and craved to know her thoughts and feelings. The woman had been thinking about her past, about a dear young son who had accidentally died in Australia. Kezia knew by heart the story of her uncle's death, but she longed to hear it again. To listen

to her grandmother, gave her pleasure; to have her attention and companionship, an undescribable relish. The girl, however, is suddenly struck by the idea of death. As Mrs. Fairfield patiently explains to her that death has to occur to every living person on earth, including the two of them, the girl is amazed. She cannot believe she will possibly die one day. And to lose her dear grandmother in death is something she cannot accept.

Kezia runs to her grandma and, with frantic hugs and kisses, pleads the woman to promise her she will never die. The sensible lady neither promises that nor leaves the girl in despair. Instead, she takes the opportunity to teach Kezia a lesson, to prepare the girl to endure the inevitable tribulations of life. Had she known the wonderful promises of God regarding the abolishing of death; had she read in the Bible that "As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing" (77), she would have certainly rejoiced to comfort the innocent child. For the moment though, the woman intelligently deviates the course of the girl's interest and makes her happy again:

...She began to tickle Kezia. 'Say never, say never, say never,' gurgled Kezia, while they lay there laughing in each other's arms. 'Come, that's enough, my squirrel! That's enough, my wild pony!' said old Mrs. Fairfield, setting her cap straight. 'Pick up my knitting.'

Both of them had forgotten what the "never" was about (78).

Here one has a demonstration of Mrs. Fairfield's practical lessons. The way in which she affectionately instructs Kezia is for sure the same she used in the past when helping her own children cope with difficulties and when inculcating in them a fast adherence to morality. Thanks to that courageous woman's disciplinary example, that day in the life of the Burnells

(though replete with incongruous attitudes from early morning) ends up in tranquility. As in a fairy tale, the characters — due to their honorable behaviour — deserve a peaceful sleep. And the author, on her turn, draws the curtain upon them saying to the audience,

A cloud small, serene, floated across the moon. In that moment of darkness the sea sounded deep, troubled. Then the cloud sailed away, and the sound of the sea was a vague murmur, as though it waked out of a dark dream. All was still(79).

II. 4. "The Doll's House"

"After that grandmother came into the nursery with Gwen and sat in front of the nursery fire in the rocking chair with her. Meg and Tadpole were away staying with Aunt Harriet, and they had gone before the new doll's house arrived, so that was why I so longed to have somebody to show it to. I had gone all through it myself, from the kitchen to the dining-room, up into the bedrooms with the doll's lamp on the table, heaps and heaps of time"(Mansfield's memories in Mantz's book, p.66).

The tranquility established in "At the Bay" is not to last long, though. Some months later when the characters are once more called to action — this time to perform the episode of "The Doll's House" — they are inevitably engulfed into trouble again. Now the family are back to their house in the country and the child Kezia(still the central figure in the story) is a schoolgirl. The relationship she maintains with her school mates is for the present the vehicle the writer chooses to illustrate Kezia's integrity — sharply contrasted with the shallowness of the people around her. The adults are barely mentioned here, providing with their social lore the frame to the tale. Aunt Beryl, nevertheless(with her inconsequent behaviour), plays an

important role in the plot, for her sudden intrusion at the end of the story helps create its climax.

"The Doll's House" deals, more explicitly, with the problem of social class distinction, showing the prejudice of the rich against the poor. Katherine Mansfield describes the different conflicts this type of prejudice generates, revealing that children are the main victims of such a distorted behaviour. The rich children, imitating their snobbish parents, despise the poor, who, on their turn, experiment all sorts of bitter reactions, running from insecurity to hate. So, the root of social prejudice, according to the story, lies with the adults of a community and the children merely repeat what they hear from them.

The bad influence of community upon children, the writer seems to tell, is not always paramount, for there are exceptions, exemplified here in the figure of Kezia. Told not to show the Kelveys (the washerwoman's children) their doll's house — a lovely gift the Burnell girls had received from a friend of the family — Kezia repels the idea. Her attitude conforms to Arthur Jersild's words. The psychologist affirms that the child on approaching adolescence begins to get rid of his parents' ideas and to interiorize his moral values (concerning what is right or wrong) and wants to externalize them (80). So, Kezia urges to know why she cannot invite the Kelveys in only once, since the poor girls when on their way to and from school pass in front of the Burnells' place every day. The girl poses the question to her mother just to receive a dull reprimand. Linda Burnell is never moved by her daughter's feelings. She is not willing to quench the child's thirst for justice. When Kezia insists and asks Linda why not, her mother answers rather wily, "Run away, Kezia;

you know quite well why not"(81).

But the girl does not know. She cannot understand her mother. She wants to be told why she is forbidden to give the poor Kelveys that little pleasure, when all the other girls at school are to see the doll's house. The judge's little girls and the doctor's daughters are the first ones to be invited. They cannot hide their excitement and flattery towards Isabel Burnell, who considers herself the real owner of the toy. Being the eldest, Kezia's sister is given the right not only to choose two girls each day, but also to show them the house. Consequently, the Burnells' doll's house is the only subject matter at school. At playtime the children do not talk about anything else, for

It was too marvellous;... They had never seen anything like it in their lives. All the rooms were papered. There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with gold frames complete. Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing-room, green in the dining-room; tables, beds with real bedclothes, a cradle, a stove, a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug. But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp. It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe. It was even filled all ready for lighting, though, of course, you couldn't light it. But there was something inside that looked like oil, and that moved when you shook it(82).

The writer here, at the beginning of the story, introduces Kezia and already singles her out from the other girls. While Isabel and her admirers value more highly the luxurious details of the house: the carpet, the beautifully wrought furniture, Kezia sets her heart on the lamp. The father and mother dolls asleep on the beds are too stiff, too artificial for her, "but the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, 'I live here.' The lamp was real"(83).

Kezia, though used to respecting her sister's leadership, cannot help interrupting Isabel's first description of the house, when the latter forgets to mention the lamp. Full of enthusiasm she cries, "you've forgotten the lamp, Isabel. The lamp's best of all"(84). The girls surrounding Isabel, now trying to put a hand on her arm, now striking her shoulder, have no ears to Kezia. But little Else Kelvey — who was always close to the girls to listen to their talk — is immediately touched by Kezia's words. Because she cannot possibly peep at the wonderful lamp, she creates in her mind a fantastic image of that luminous object that so much impressed Kezia. For the fortunate girls did not only despise Else and her elder sister Lil, but they made fun of them. They frequently exchanged gossips about their worn out clothes, the ugly hats they wore, and their awkward manners. The proud girls could not lose any chance to bereave the Kelveys. They were always debasing them, taunting them. But Kezia took no part in their mockery.

There came the day when all the girls had finally seen the singular little house and, as they gathered together to eat their dinner, still bewitched by that aura of excitement for having been distinguished by Isabel, they suddenly caught sight of

the Kelveys eating out of their paper, always by themselves, always listening, [and] they wanted to be horrid to them. Emmie Cole started the whisper.

'Lil Kelvey's going to be a servant when she grows up.'

'O-oh, how awful' said Isabel Burnell, and she made eyes at Emmie"(85).

There it was. The poisonous game once started, who could possibly stop it before it had fully satisfied its partners? The

girls, one after another, as if playing an ordinary match, attacked the Kelveys with their evil remarks and scornful laughter. The impassivity of the poor sisters, however, exasperated them, increasing their aggressive boldness. Blinded by the bitter taste of defeat, Lena "hissed spitefully, 'Yah, yer father's in prison!'" (86) That was the best thing to have said, they all agreed, for they were overjoyed, "and never did they skip so high, run in and out so fast, or do such daring things as on that morning" (87).

The reader is not told how Kezia felt about that. Mansfield does not go into details but, using the dramatic method she presents the characters in action, making the reader follow Kezia's manoeuvres eagerly, as if he, having taken part in the weaving of her plan, is absolutely certain of its success. The sturdy girl does not postpone her scheme. That same day, after being driven home from school, she runs to the gate and lingers her eyes on the road. Her nervous state of expectance makes the reader guess she is waiting for the Kelveys. She is going to talk to them, to take them in, to show them the doll's house.

As for her people, Kezia does not care about them right now. She has decided to overrule them all, to step on their unfair norms, to punish those merciless girls at school. Greatly surprised are the Kelveys when Kezia greets them and invites them to see the doll's house. The stone-like sisters are speechless and, as Kezia insists, Lil shakes her head violently and says, "Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us" (88). But Else, once again moved by Kezia's words, manifests the desire to see the toy by twitching Lil's skirt. The two girls then follow Kezia who kindly opens the doll's house for them. "There's the

drawing-room and the dining-room, and that's the —"(89)

"The lamp," Kezia was going to say when the angry voice of Aunt Beryl interrupts them in their contemplation of the tiny lamp. It is needless to say that the indignant woman frightened them, screamed at Kezia, called her names, and "shooed the girls out as if they were chickens"(90). The writer attributes Aunt Beryl's rage to her emotional problems:

The afternoon had been awful. A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman's Bush, he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why!(91)

From the quotation above one can deduce that Beryl has finally been won by the appeal of sexuality and now she is facing a consequent problem: to hide her forbidden relations from a decent family. She especially fears her mother's moralistic views, and the child Kezia — for siding with the old woman in everything — is certainly the object of her attack, the chief instrument she uses to breathe out her oppressed revolt.

But Kezia, being accustomed to her aunt's scoldings, does not reply to them. The child is probably absorbed by her own thoughts. Having shown the doll's house to the Kelveys, Kezia feels a delightful satisfaction that nothing else can disturb. Her state of mind(as always, not described by the writer) is presented through the description of little Else's — most certainly, another of Kezia's doubles. Despite the fact that the two girls live in different worlds and are both conscious of the social barrier raised between them, they have much in common, sharing attitudes, feelings and interests.

One has seen that Else is despised and rejected at school,

and so is Kezia, in spite of being rich. Kezia's attachment to righteousness, as her grandmother had instructed her, makes her different from the other girls who, misunderstanding her good intentions, label her as pedantic. In Else, the reader finds a similar behaviour. The girl has a dignified stance, and while her sister Lil is usually directing the other girls a silly smile, or trying to please the teacher by bringing her flowers, Else never smiles at anyone, and she never talks either.

Concerning the lamp, when Kezia first sees it she feels a thrilling attraction towards it. She finds it so cute, so real that she even applies life to it, fancying that it speaks and says, 'I live here.' So, the lamp, in Kezia's imagination, is a kind of companion she finds in the house, somebody who talks to her, and the fast liaison established between her and the lamp is only understood by Else Kelvey whose affinity to the lamp is equally evident, even before she sees it. Like Kezia, Else respects every one, being however, ready to fight difficulties to see the fulfillment of her intents. This explains the two girls' determination to share that experience — the contemplation of the lamp — regardless the bad consequences their act may trigger.

Of those consequences the reader is not informed, for the story presents an open ending. Yet, one can guess that Kezia's action will undoubtedly change the attitude of most of the people involved, not only the children but the adults as well. The proud Isabel and her suite will no doubt be disappointed because something they so much cherished — their exclusive right to see the doll's house — was definitely usurped from them. The inferiority of the Kelveys, which brought into prominence

their own superiority, was disregarded or abolished by someone from their own group. And this someone, that quiet, queer girl, to whom they never gave much importance, was soon the subject of their talking, the target of their judgement, one may guess. As for the adults, Kezia's conduct, though certainly seen by some as a sign of disobedience, might be regarded by others as an attempt to do justice, making them wonder about the correctness of their own behaviour.

Nonetheless, for Cherry Hankin, Kezia's act of justice is not "what makes the ending so satisfying.... but the manner in which the imagination of the two underprivileged but dreamy children is transfixed by the 'little lamp'" (92). The lamp is indeed an essential element in "The Doll's House." After considering Aunt Beryl's feelings, the writer's camera is again focussed on the Kelveys, now resting by the side of the road. They are quiet as usual, not scared anymore, not even hurt. Once again, having smothered the threatening power of reality, they give in to fantasy, here totally provoked by the wee lamp whose importance was first sown in their mind by Kezia's words. As in a reverie, Else Kelvey, parting her lips in her 'rare smile' whispers, "I seen the little lamp," and the girls feel happy.

The importance of the lamp for the children helps reveal the theme of the story. The lamp is a symbol of light, truth, and life. Without a lamp one cannot see the beauty of life, or the dangerous obstacles around him, so that he can avoid them and be safe. The lamp, therefore, constitutes the principal thing in the house, and Kezia knew this. Even Jesus Christ used this very symbol to illustrate His great importance for us, saying, "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will by

no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life" (93). Jesus' father Himself inspired the psalmist to register, concerning the significance of the Bible, "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway" (94).

Katherine Mansfield was fascinated by the effect of light on man's surrounding and life. She especially loved the light of the sun and it is difficult to find a single story by her in which the preciousness of light is not emphasized, as the following passages can attest,

Sunlight darted through the glass roof of the station in long beams of blue and gold; a little boy ran up and down carrying a tray of primroses; there was something about the people — about the women especially — something idle and yet eager. The most thrilling day of the year, the first real day of Spring had unclosed its warm delicious beauty even to London eyes (95).

It is morning. I lie in the empty bed.... Through the shutters the sunlight comes up from the river and flows over the ceiling in trembling waves (96).

The sun had set. In the western sky there were great masses of crushed-up rose-coloured clouds. Broad beams of light shone through the clouds and beyond them as if they would cover the whole sky. Overhead the blue faded; it turned a pale gold, and the bush outlined against it gleamed dark and brilliant like metal (97).

Amazing as it may seem, the so precious sunlight is given to us free. God has never failed to send it to us each morning and never has He asked us anything in return. He gives light to us so naturally that some people do not even notice it. They do not stop to look at it or to thank God for it. But those with simple heart, like Kezia and the Kelveys do see it with great regard and appreciation.

Here, one may think, resides the theme of the story — the revelation of a simple heart, or the attachment to simplicity and goodness. These two statements can be easily applied to

Kezia, making her the special child Katherine Mansfield meant to reveal to her readers. The author's message is one of love and comfort: despite the proliferation of badness and injustice in the world (Mansfield seems to say), there will always be a simple heart, a friendly hand that — holding a lamp — bravely lights the path for others, making their life meaningful.

II. 5. Conclusive Remarks on Kezia's Stories

"The more I see of life the more certain I feel that it's the people who live remote from cities who inherit the earth. London, for instance, is an awful place to live in. Not only is the climate abominable but it's a continual chase after distraction. There's no peace of mind — no harvest to be reaped out of it. And another thing is the longer I live the more I turn to New Zealand. I thank God I was born in New Zealand. A young country is a real heritage, though it takes one time to recognize it. But New Zealand is in my very bones. What wouldn't I give to have a look at it!" (Mansfield's letter to her father, 18 March 1922).

The close examination of Kezia's stories confirmed the suspicion that they are valuable and representative of the author's opus. To begin with they are autobiographical and one can envisage the character Kezia as being the writer herself. All the same, the stories have a universal gusto for they are not primarily concerned with plot, but with mood and atmosphere. They reveal Mansfield's main characteristic: the treatment of people's emotions or the effort to make one aware of the different experiences dwelling in the human mind, ranging from uneasiness, fear, anxiety, frustration, suffering, despair, to hope and happiness. Thus, Kezia's stories present a veritable portrait of Katherine's works, enrolling her favourite themes and fictional style. Further, the perusal displayed interesting facts that — though already shown in the analyses of the stories — still

constitute a latent source for consideration.

Looking at Kezia's stories as a unity, one could argue that the most relevant fact about them is the development of the protagonist. Kezia changes her attitudes as she grows up and her change is not sudden, but gradual and steadfast. In "The Little Girl" she was rather insecure and frightened but, as her father presents to her a new side of his personality, as she realises her father can be understanding and helpful, the girl begins to see people under a different light. She starts observing not only the variety of attitudes and reactions they assume but also the consequences of those upon the interconnection of the family members.

By comparing the different behaviour of the people around her Kezia can intelligently detach the kind of demeanor that appears to be the most just and correct concerning human relationships. More than that, the child(though generally criticized and misunderstood) exhibits steady adherence to good principles. In so doing, Kezia proves to be wise, benign, and self-confident. These extraordinary qualities — the writer seems to claim — are not inherent in a being, but cultivated through infancy. As Kezia's example demonstrates, love is the fundamental tool for the good adjustment of a child. In Kezia's case it is the love of her grandmother that refines her education, building in her a solid structure.

It certainly sounds contradictory to say that Kezia represents the writer herself when Katherine Mansfield as a child did not in the least behave like her protagonist. In spite of that, the correspondence between the two is rather conspicuous. In the foregoing chapter of this dissertation it was said that

Katherine Mansfield had been a rebel since childhood, and she does give evidence of her troublesome position in the house, registering in her journal, "Damn my family! O Heavens, what bores they are! I detest them all heartily. I shall certainly not be here much longer. Thank heavens for that! (98) Towards the end of her life, Katherine — regretting the follies she had committed at home — writes her father a touching letter in which she begs him to forgive her:

... I am ashamed to ask you for your forgiveness and yet how can I approach you without it? ... I cannot tell you how often I dream of you. Sometimes night after night I dream that I am back in New Zealand and sometimes you are angry with me and at other times this horrible behaviour of mine has not happened and all is well between us.... (99)

One cannot deny that Katherine Mansfield as a child and youth faced experiences similar to those she applied to Kezia. However, their behaviour was quite different, the writer showing none of the control or self-confidence displayed by her favourite character. The lack of parental affection and care, for example, proved so harmful to the writer's life, did not disturb Kezia who sagely managed to compensate for it. The protagonist then is that strong, competent child Katherine Mansfield would like to have been. As she creates Kezia she feels perhaps that, instead of having left her house she should have stayed there to help her relatives improve, as Kezia tries to do in "The Doll's House."

Therefore, Kezia is the heroine Katherine Mansfield could not be. Far from being a heroine, the writer became a victim of that environment in much the same way as another important female character in the stories — Beryl Fairfield — did. As

pointed out in the analyses of the narratives, Kezia's aunt was not satisfied at home. She wanted to have freedom, a lover, and her own house. So did Katherine when living under her parents' roof. It is worth noting that for Alpers both Kezia and Beryl stand for Katherine herself. As the first chapter shows Katherine Mansfield, abandoning her parents and country, began a promiscuous sort of life in Europe. Following her steps, Beryl Fairfield (as clearly demonstrated in Kezia's stories) turns her back to morality and brings shame to her family.

Hence, one concludes that Kezia's stories make the reconstruction of the writer's own past. One can say they are important because they reveal not only the life of the author but also the diversified feelings that warred within her bosom. Through the rebellious Beryl she reflects her impetuous temperament. But she could be mild and sensible too. So, it is through the sober character of Kezia that Katherine manifests the loving qualities she had always possessed.

In revealing her identity to the public Katherine Mansfield might have had in mind the desire to justify her queer behaviour or to call the reader's attention to the importance of love and understanding within the family bounds. Let us not forget that the writer had declared to be interested in writing about love and truth and this she faithfully accomplished through the pages of these stories where Kezia Burnell — full of love and truth — shows the good side of Kathleen Beauchamp. But Kathleen Beauchamp, being human and therefore more truthful than Kezia, naturally develops (alongside those good qualities) less honourable feelings, such as hatred and falsehood. These adverse emotions, as already suggested, are wittingly externalized.

by Beryl Fairfield.

Despite the evidence that the writer transforms the events of her life into fiction, the personal matters she uses become less important in comparison with the psychological treatment she dispenses to the characters. One discerns Mansfield's autobiographical accounts function just as a starting point to convey human experiences within the universe of the familial arrangement. By portraying the two basic ties of human life — the relationship between man and woman or husband and wife, and the relationship between parents and children, Kezia's stories acquire the profile of universality they were said to have. At the same time, these very connections expose the kernel of Mansfield's writing as a whole.

A quick look at the themes of Kezia's stories proves to any reader the truth of these assertions, for their prevailing themes and ideas — namely lack of love, dissatisfaction, loneliness, and death; fantasy; desire for freedom and sexuality, marriage and motherhood; social prejudice, and the revelation of a simple heart — are commonplace in Katherine's works. Very significantly, they are usually associated with the presence of a child — another evidence of their relevance. Most of these fictional elements are present, for instance, in "The Woman at the Store," written in 1911 — the beginning of the writer's career — as well as in "The Fly" (she wrote it in 1922) and in other stories equally representative of her last productions.

In "The Woman at the Store" the female character — tired of being abandoned by her husband — shoots the man and buries his body in the garden, under the eyes of her little girl, whom she threatens to kill if she lets out the secret. Like Linda in

"Prelude" she accuses the spouse of spoiling her health and appearance. When talking to the visitors she says,

It's six years since I was married, and four miscarriages. I says to 'im, I says, what do you think I'm doing up 'ere? If you was back at the coast, I'd have you lynched for child murder. Over and over I tell 'im — you've broken my spirit and spoiled my looks and wot for — that's wot I'm driving at....
...Trouble with me is, ...he left me too much alone. When the coach stopped coming, sometimes he'd go away days, sometimes he'd go away weeks, and leave me ter look after the store(100).

Loneliness and death are also discernable in "The Fly." Here the protagonist's sorrow is caused by the death of a dear son in the war. The man cannot overcome that loss for his son was the reason of his life and efforts.

His boy was an only son. Ever since his birth the boss had worked at building up this business for him; it had no other meaning if it was not for the boy. Life itself had come to have no other meaning. How on earth could he have slaved, denied himself, kept going all those years without the promise for ever before him of the boy's stepping into his shoes and carrying on where he left off?

And that promise had been so near being fulfilled. The boy had been in the office learning the ropes for a year before the war. Every morning they had started together; they had come back by the same train. And what congratulations he had received as the boy's father! No wonder; he had taken to it marvellously(101).

Despite his unbearable pain and desire to weep, the boss cannot shed a tear and he kills the fly, as Françoise Defromont suggests, "in order to obliterate his own suffering, as if he was actually killing his wound"(102).

Death and the impossibility of crying are also the lot of the charwoman in "Life of Ma Parker," written in 1920. The poor lady had worked hard all her life. After taking care of thirteen children and a sick husband, and after losing eight dear

relatives in death, Mrs. Parker cannot put up with the decease of her little grandson, Lennie. The distressed woman wants to cry out to relieve her bosom, but she has got nowhere to go, no place to be by herself:

...But when she began to make the bed, smoothing, tucking, patting, the thought of little Lennie was unbearable. Why did he have to suffer so? That's what she couldn't understand. Why should a little angel child have to arsk for his breath and fight for it? ...It was too much — she'd had too much in her life to bear. She'd borne it up till now, she'd kept herself to herself, and never once had she been seen to cry.... But now! Lennie gone — what had she? She had nothing. He was all she'd got from life, and now he was took too. Why must it all have happened to me? she wondered.

Her misery was so terrible that she pinned on her hat, put on her jacket and walked out of the flat like a person in a dream....

Ah, that's what she wants to do, my dove. Gran wants to cry. If she could only cry now, cry for a long time, over everything.... she couldn't wait any more.... Where could she go?...

She couldn't go home; Ethel was there. It would frighten Ethel out of her life.... She couldn't possibly go back to the gentleman's flat....

Oh, wasn't there anywhere she could hide....

Ma Parker stood, looking up and down. The icy wind blew out her apron into a balloon. And now it began to rain. There was nowhere(103).

Mrs Parker's hopelessness, increased by the icy, deadly wind — her only companion for the time — echoes the woman's anguish in "Miss Brill"(1920) who, in her cold, "little dark room — her room like a cupboard"(104), buries into its box her prize — the fur for which she had just been ridiculed. The real death of Ma Parker's grandson is equivalent to the symbolic death of Miss Brill's fur which she used to talk to and cuddle as if it were a child. A few moments before that Miss Brill had been sitting on a bench in the Jardins Publiques, enjoying the fine afternoon and the company of people. In her lassitude(like Beryl when playing the guitar and admiring herself in the

mirror in "Prelude") Miss Brill fantasizes:

She was on the stage. She thought of the old invalid gentleman to whom she read the newspaper four afternoons a week while he slept in the garden. She had got quite used to the frail head on the cotton pillow, the hollowed eyes, the open mouth and the high pinched nose. If he'd been dead she mightn't have noticed for weeks; she wouldn't have minded. But suddenly he knew he was having the paper read to him by an actress! "An actress!" The old head lifted; two points of light quivered in the old eyes. "An actress — are ye?" And Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and said gently: "Yes, I have been an actress for a long time"(105).

And Miss Brill, feeling happy and comfortable inside her dear fur, wants to smile at every one and even sing with the band, but suddenly she is severely insulted by a young couple she had been admiring dearly,

"No, not now," said the girl. "Not here, I can't."
"But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?" asked the boy. "Why does she come here at all — who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?"

"It's her fu-fur which is so funny," giggled the girl. "It's exactly like a fried whiting."

"Ah, be off with you!" said the boy in an angry whisper(106).

Miss Brill's happiness extinguishes instantly like fire whipped by water and the helpless woman hobbles along the streets, as though crawling under heavy smoke.

On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey-cake at the baker's....

But today she passed the baker's by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room... and sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the neckler quickly; quickly without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying(107).

Miss Brill's bitter disappointment finds resonance in

Bertha Young's in "Bliss," written in 1918. Here the young woman had been feeling extraordinarily happy,

"I'm too happy — too happy!" she murmured.

And she seemed to see on her eyelids the lovely pear tree with its wide open blossoms as a symbol of her own life.

Really — really — she had everything. She was young. Harry and she were as much in love as ever and they got on together splendidly and were really good pals. She had an adorable baby. They didn't have to worry about money. They had this absolutely satisfactory house and garden. And friends....(108)

But later on, at the end of the party she gives to some friends, Bertha discovers suddenly that her wonderful husband has a love affair with Miss Fulton, her favourite friend. Like Miss Brill, Bertha feels desolate and alone with her shocking mishap. The tranquility she had enjoyed till then has come to an end and her troubled mind cries, "Oh, what is going to happen now?"(109).

Though not confronted with physical death, Bertha feels that something has died inside her bosom. Her good relationship with her husband has perhaps been destroyed forever and its death will certainly affect the happiness of her beloved daughter for whose sake she might be compelled to maintain the marriage tie, in spite of everything. Bertha's experience reminds us of Jonathan's in "At the Bay" who hates his job, but cannot leave it because of his children, as it was seen in the analysis of the story.

Observing now the theme of fantasy(already said to be a recurrent device in Mansfield's pieces, as the case of "Miss Brill" testifies), one can exemplify it here in "Something Childish But Very Natural," written in 1914. This is the story of two adolescents greatly in love, but completely incapable of

getting married. Towards the end of the tale Henry and Edna had rented a cottage intending to meet there to enjoy each other's company. The girl, on a second thought (and imitating Beryl in "At the Bay"), decides not to come and sends Henry a telegram that reaches the boy when he — tired of waiting for her — has sunk into a slumber in which fantasy and reality interplay, as the following quotation indicates,

Henry thought he saw a big white moth flying down the road. It perched on the gate. No, it wasn't a moth. It was a little girl in a pinafore. What a nice little girl, and he smiled in his sleep, and she smiled, too, and turned in her toes as she walked. "But she can't be living here," thought Henry. "Because this is ours. Here she comes."

When she was quite close to him she took her hand from under her pinafore and gave him a telegram and smiled and went away. There's a funny present! thought Henry, staring at it. "Perhaps it's only a make-believe one, and it's got one of those snakes inside it that fly up at you." He laughed gently in the dream and opened it very carefully. "It's just a folded paper." He took it out and spread it open.

The garden became full of shadows — they span a web of darkness over the cottage and the trees and Henry and the telegram. But Henry did not move(110).

The other themes — social prejudice, and the revelation of a simple heart — are likewise repeatedly found in the writer's production. As in "The Doll's House," they go hand in hand in "The Garden Party," (1921) where Laura in her simplicity fails to understand her parents' restrictions and admires the straightforward manners of the workmen her father had hired to put the marquee in the garden for the party:

... Only the tall fellow was left. He bent down, pinching a sprig of lavender, put his thumb and forefinger to his nose and snuffed up the smell. When Laura saw that gesture she forgot all about the karakas in her wonder at him caring for things like that — caring for the smell of lavender. How many men that she knew

would have done such a thing? Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought. Why couldn't she have workmen for friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper? She would get on much better with men like these(111).

The revelation of a simple heart theme also appears in several other stories, among them "The Little Governess" and "The Lady's Maid."

But Kezia's stories are also important for their craftiness which can be appreciated in the various quotes provided above. Before analysing their formal aspect however, it is worth considering some theories about the short story to situate Mansfield's production in time and place, so that one can contemplate it from a more strategical angle.

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CHAPTER III

THE SHORT STORY AND

KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S USE OF IT:

HER BORROWINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

KATHERINE MANSFIELD has been placed "among the three or four most important short story writers of the present century," (1) for hers are superlative samples of the modern short story which flourished towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is true that the narrative tale has long before that held the attention of men, women, and children worldwide. "From the beginning of history," Somerset Maugham says, "men have gathered round the camp fire, or in a group in the market place, to listen to the telling of a story" (2). But it is not until the second half of the last century that the name "short story" was applied to the narrative tale, differing it from the novel mainly for its simple plot, fewer characters, and less diversified setting.

These differences, to modern critics, are not sufficient to grant an established position to the short story as an independent genre. "There is no single characteristic or cluster of characteristics," Suzanne Ferguson writes, "that the critics agree absolutely distinguishes the short story from other

fictions"(3). Today, not few are the controversial theories about the short story. By confronting some of those theories, one could better evaluate Katherine Mansfield's position in regard to them, the kind of narrative she favoured and the writers she most admired. This evaluation would also yield the understanding of Mansfield's singular handling of the short story and the sort of contribution she proffered to this literary genre.

According to structuralistic views, first expressed by V.K. Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), and later by Roland Barthes in "An Introduction in the Structural Analysis of Narrative" (1975), there is hardly any difference between the short story and other narrative forms, for "all stories, short or long," present the same elements such as characters, setting, events, a 'beginning, middle, and an end,' organised in cohesion. The structuralists suggest that any kind of story, like the sentence, has 'slots', where different elements may be placed. So, any story can be either "reduced to minimal statements... or expanded by the inclusion of optional developments in the narrative chain"(4).

For Suzanne Ferguson, nonetheless, it is perhaps not so difficult to take out or insert statements in a novel. As for the short story, however, the task becomes rather hard, for the 'best' stories — she exemplifies with Joyce's "Araby" — "give us a sense of the inevitability of each sentence and persuade us that they are as complete as possible, that each addition or deletion would destroy their aesthetic wholeness"(5).

The compression of the short story and the strict

arrangement of all its parts, constitute, one would say, its essential attributes, making it different from the novel, for example. But most critics think these attributes were only properly applied to the short story until the early nineteenth century, when it presented Romantic aspects, such as 'unity of effect' and 'lyricism.' But from that time onwards the short story has manifested so many changes that it escapes definition.

It was Edgar Allan Poe who first presented theories about the short story. When reviewing Hawthorne's **Twice-told Tales** in 1842, Poe developed a theory defending, among other things, brevity and the importance of a 'single effect'. Poe's ideas have been widely discussed, being accepted by some critics and rejected by those who claim the short story cannot be defined as a genre, because it has "never generated a body of useful theory and criticism comparable to that which accompanied the rise of the modern novel"(6). Still another group of critics, well represented by Charles E. May, believes Poe's theories were destructive to the short story for they paved the ground for the mechanized profile it later acquired.

Boris Eikhenbaum, for instance, in studying O'Henry's stories, resorts to points already mentioned by Poe, as his definition of the tale reveals: "Short story é um termo que subentende sempre uma estória e que deve responder a duas condições: dimensões reduzidas e destaque dado à conclusão."(7) His three characteristics of the short story are also based on Poe's ideas: "1. a unidade de construção; 2. o efeito principal no meio da narração; 3. o forte acento final"(8).

H. G. Wells is another critic to embrace Poe's principles.

Wells states that

A short story is, or should be, a single thing. It aims at producing one single vivid effect; it has to seize the attention at the outset, and never relaxing, gather it together more and more until the climax is reached. The limits of the human capacity to attend closely therefore set a limit to it: it must explode and finish before interruption occurs or fatigue sets in(9).

The 'single effect', Poe says, should be artistically 'wrought out' by the writer, whose intention is to exert dominion over the reader's emotions. "If his very initial sentence," Poe continues, "tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design"(10).

Julio Cortázar summarizes Poe's ideas saying that "um conto é uma verdadeira máquina literária de criar interesse," and he adds that Poe "compreendeu que a eficácia de um conto depende de sua intensidade como acontecimento puro, isto é, que todo comentário ao acontecimento em si(...) deve ser radicalmente suprimido"(11). Cortázar, like Jorge Luis Borges and several other story tellers, agree with Poe that the short story is a construction, carefully arranged in the writer's mind before being written. The American author Katherine Anne Porter said, "If I didn't know the ending of a story, I wouldn't begin... I always write my last line, my last paragraph, my last page first and then I go back and work towards it"(12). Katherine Mansfield's words harmonize with this view as she put it, "once one has thought out a story nothing remains but the labour"(13). Somerset Maugham also planned his stories. He believed "the

short story demands form. It demands succinctness. Diffuseness kills it. It depends on construction"(14).

Brander Matthews was another writer to be convinced that the short story had an established form. He acknowledged that the Victorian novel had minimized the importance of the short story in England, while in France and America this literary genre had reached a remarkable recognition. In 1901 Matthews published **The Philosophy of the Short Story** where he says that the short story should present "a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation"(15). Matthews' strict rules (mirrored in Poe's principles), as Charles May suggests, led critics and writers (like O'Henry and his followers) to treat the short story as a mere formal composition with detailed components, destined to commercialization(16). This procedure marred the real merit of the genre, destituting it of serious criticism.

Countering Poe's views, H. E. Bates does not see the short story as a genre, but as a hybrid composition, considering that it has affinities with various other fictional forms, such as the ballad, the essay, the anecdote, the novel, just to mention some. Indeed, Conrad, Lawrence, and Maugham wrote long short stories which are also called 'novelas'. Bates says that the nineteenth-century English short story was a kind of 'orphan slavey' to the novelist because it had no 'history' in England before 1900(17).

Another controversial point sprung from Poe's theory is concerned with his 'single effect'. Critics like James Cooper Lawrence have questioned what kind of effect this would be. Some

have suggested that the 'single effect' was aptly applied to Poe's horror tales, being, on the other hand, quite absent from more modern short fiction in which the depiction of psychological conflicts and not the elucidation of plot is noteworthy. Lawrence reminds the reader that innumerable are the short stories (for example, Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King") which present more than one episode and do not "by any means always produce a single foreseen effect" (18).

Despite all controversy, however, the theorists so far mentioned happen to agree that the short story is an artistic construction and that compression is its landmark. Katherine Mansfield did not think differently. She believed (and said so) that the short story should be concise, thrifty. However, as her production alone testifies, she did not tie herself to any pre-established pattern or set of rules, but, on the contrary, composed in different models as the occasion and mood led her to. It means to say that her writing presents a rich variety of form: she made good use of the compressed tale as in "The Little Girl" and "The Doll's House," but she also experimented with freer compositions, such as "Prelude" and "At the Bay" where compression gives its room to fragmentation.

Mansfield's defense of compression can be found in her *Journal*. When commenting on Chekhov's letters she says,

Tchekhov made a mistake in thinking that if he had had more time he would have written more fully, described the rain, and the midwife and the doctor having tea. The truth is one can get only **so much** into a story; there is always a sacrifice. One has to leave out what one knows and longs to use (19).

Like Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield understood this 'sacrifice'

demanding by the short story, avoiding the superfluous, as he recommended to his brother Alexander Chekhov, "Abridge, brother, abridge!" (20).

Actually, Mansfield was only one of the authors in England to partake Chekhov's ideas regarding the conciseness of short fiction. The instructions he launched in his **Letters on the Short Story** proved to be useful to many writers, among whom one could pick up Kipling, who used to spend years cutting down a story, eliminating any gaudy ornament or extra detail he would consider dispensable (21).

In his well compressed stories, Chekhov tried to picture the moment of life — something Katherine Mansfield did too. He would select a certain situation experienced by a human being, a situation which (for its mark of reality) would sound familiar to any of his readers. It is difficult to affirm whether Chekhov was the first writer to do this, but it is undeniable that he did it with excellence, influencing a great number of story-writers, probably including Katherine Mansfield. In fact Elizabeth Bowen sees in Katherine's work the avenue to Chekhov's influence. She says that

Chekhov's cloudy detachment, charged with pity.... his deceptive looseness got him imitators.... He influenced at second-hand, through the work of Katherine Mansfield, a group of writers who did not know him directly, or only turned to him later (22).

The portrayal of a single scene in everyday life (or the drawing of a definite moment — thus headed in English by Katherine Mansfield) became then a fast trace of the short story, along with compression. Nadine Gordimer saw in this kind of

portrayal the supreme advantage of the short story over the novel, since the latter — "For the sake of the form" — had to maintain "a consistency of relationship throughout the experience that cannot and does not convey the quality of human life," (23) lapsing therefore into falsity. By drawing "the only thing we can be sure of," Nadine says, "the present moment," the short story is much truer than the novel.

Also, by drawing 'the present moment' the modern tale has been compared to an impressionist picture. In truth, various theorists have called attention to the relation between the short story and the visual arts. Valerie Shaw, for instance, says this is "the significant respect in which short stories differ from longer narrative forms" (24). While the realistic novel presents a chain of events, "a discursive sequence of causes and effects," the compressed story displays a picture of the moment, making both writer and reader "share acute consciousness of form." And Valerie goes on,

We see Bertha in her green dress in Mansfield's "Bliss" (1920); we see the red, blue, and yellow lights shifting across one another as the summer breeze stirs the petals in Woolf's "Kew Gardens", but no account of the sequential events leading up to these visual events — selecting and putting on the dress, or walking into the park — are provided; rather, they are deliberately eliminated so that the bright focus on the visual moment is kept clear, undimmed by description or elaboration (25).

The fact that Katherine Mansfield was so very fond of painting must have helped her draw lively scenes, as the one in "Bliss" mentioned by Shaw. Roger Fry's Post-Impressionism Exhibition in 1910 did impress the British artists in general. Katherine Mansfield was particularly moved by Van Gogh's pictures

and she registered in her **Journal** that the pictures "taught [her] something about writing which was queer, a kind of freedom — or rather, a shaking free" (26).

The lesson Katherine derived from painting heartened her acute sensibility and revealed itself through her descriptions of scenes and setting, which have not escaped the critics' scrutiny. R. J. Rees, for example, affirms that it is in this respect that Katherine Mansfield excels.

Before scanning one of Mansfield's representations of setting, it seems appropriate to refer to Suzanne Ferguson's study of setting in modern fiction. She realises the use of impressionist setting distinguishes the modern short story from earlier literary forms. Setting, Ferguson admits, is no more specifically used to locate the scene, but to reveal the "mood of the character" (27). The following tracing of setting in "Prelude," one might agree, can well clarify Ferguson's words. When Kezia is left with the neighbours because there was no room for her in the buggy, the girl feels very unhappy and goes back to her house, as if to say good-bye to the old place:

Slowly she walked up the back steps, and through the scullery into the kitchen. Nothing was left in it but a lump of gritty yellow soap in one corner of the kitchen window sill and a piece of flannel stained with a blue bag in another. The fireplace was choked up with rubbish. She poked among it but found nothing except a hairtidy with a heart painted on it that had belonged to the servant girl. Even that she left lying, and she trailed through the narrow passage into the drawing-room. The Venetian blind was pulled down but not drawn close. Long pencil rays of sunlight shone through and the wavy shadow of a bush outside danced on the gold lines. Now it was still, now it began to flutter again, and now it came almost as far as her feet. Zoom! Zoom! a bluebottle knocked against the ceiling; the carpet-tacks had little bits of red fluff sticking to them (28).

The description of the empty house substitutes for a plot or even a conversation between the girl and the other members of her family, whom she might see or hear the voice in each corner of the abandoned home: the room where the family usually assembled to talk; the place where her father's favourite chair stood; the winter evenings when the children sat in front of the fireplace to listen to grandmother's stories. These are only some of the thoughts the reader can attribute to the character's mind as he follows Kezia from room to room. As they enter the drawing-room, something marvelous happens: the setting is now painted with bright colours that move hither and thither, catching the girl's imagination and disposition. Towards the end of the paragraph, it is not the narrator who speaks anymore, but the character herself, who, not tormented any longer says, "Zoom! Zoom!", playing with the sun rays that draw pictures on the ceiling.

Mansfield's sensitivity to visual arts is also referred to by Antony Alpers. In 1909, Alpers says, she got in contact with **Jugend** a German magazine of art nouveau whose illustrations had a strong influence upon her writing. Similarly, Valerie Shaw comments that "the bold outlines and striking use of gestures in the work of the **Jugend** artists are discernable in Mansfield's ability to tell a story through vibrant images"(29). Shaw's observation adds a new element to Mansfield's art: the use of gestures — an ingenuous manifestation of her great love for drama. As a matter of fact, the similarity between the modern short story and drama has been pointed out by specialists, when observing the short story's dramatic representation of reality and its focus on a central conflict(30).

It has been made evident so far that Mansfield's writing was influenced by her strong inclination towards painting and drama alike. Her principal poles of influence are said to have been Theocritus and Chekhov, to whom she might owe the innovations she granted to the art of fiction. From Theocritus she is believed to have inherited the zest for mime and poetry, which largely affected her use of form and point of view. From Chekhov she would have copied the lyrical narrative, the succinct style, the skill to describe minute points and effects, especially those provoked by light, noise and smell and the forging of the plotless tale.

T. O. Beachcroft, studying Mansfield's use of gestures and mimicry, said that in this respect she was a disciple of Theocritus. Beachcroft wrote this even before knowing that Katherine had been reading Theocritus and had published in *The New Age* of June 29, 1911, "The Festival of Coronation" which had the subtitle "With Apologies to Theocritus." Mansfield's story was based on an ancient mime called 'Adoniasusae' — the XVth Idyll of Theocritus. This idyll, according to P. E. Legrand, in his "Étude sur Théocrite" (1898), "is more suitable to be read silently and alone, than to be acted" (31).

The use of mime in Mansfield's work is notorious. In 1917 she wrote stories, such as "Two Tuppenny Ones, Please," "Late at Night," and "The Black Cap," which are completely expressed in the mime form. These literary pieces have no narrator, presenting the format of short plays. Katherine Mansfield was one of the pioneers in England to apply the dramatic method to her stories. Her tentative plays, as Alpers thinks, changed the

modern short story in English, giving a substantial contribution "to the development known as 'getting rid of the narrator'" (32).

Katherine Mansfield therefore, using a technique she improved with Theocritus (for she had been using mimicry in her tales even before she read him) dispensed with the narrator, that authority the English short story reader had been so familiar with. Instead of using the figure of the narrator "to establish values, scene, and tone" (among other things), Katherine's innovation consisted of using a dramatic form which "revealed rather than told" (33). The combination of mime with narration is definitely present in Mansfield's later work. In "Prelude," for example, this combination gives a special vividness to Beryl's interior monologue, as she admires herself in front of the mirror:

But even as she looked the smile faded from her lips and eyes. Oh God, there she was, back again, playing the same old game. False — false as ever. False as when she'd written to Nan Pym. False even when she was alone with herself, now.

What had that creature in the glass to do with her, and why was she staring? She dropped down to one side of her bed and buried her face in her arms... (34)

This kind of monologue (where the character speaks directly to the reader and uses dramatic gestures), so frequently found in her best stories, made Beachcroft say that Katherine "created, in fact, not the interior monologue, but the interior mime" (35).

The interior monologue and the other techniques which compose the stream-of-consciousness method, were used by Katherine Mansfield before they became known in the works of British writers. Those techniques — first detached in the psychological novel around the years 1913 and 1915 — were, nonetheless, previously employed by Katherine Mansfield. They are found, for

example, in "The Tiredness of Rosabel," a story she wrote in 1908. To have an sampler view of Mansfield's depiction of consciousness, let us take a look at the following passages, starting with two samples of direct interior monologue:

Rosabel did not pay the slightest attention. How handsome he had been! She had thought of no one else all day; his face fascinated her; she could see clearly his fine, straight eyebrows, and his hair grew back from his forehead with just the slightest suspicion of crisp curl, his laughing, disdainful mouth. She saw again his slim hands counting the money into hers.... Rosabel suddenly pushed the hair back from her face, her forehead was hot...if those slim hands could rest one moment... the luck of that girl!(36)

(Rosabel realized that her knees were getting stiff; she sat down on the floor and leant her head against the wall.) Oh, that lunch! The table covered with flowers, a band hidden behind a grove of palms playing music that fired her blood like wine — the soup, and oysters, and pigeons, and creamed potatoes, and champagne, of course, and afterwards coffee and cigarettes. She would lean over the table fingering her glass with one hand, talking with that charming gaiety which Harry so appreciated. Afterwards a matinee, something that gripped them both, and then tea at the "Cottage."(37)

As one can verify, in this technique the "character expresses her inmost thoughts... Without regard to logical organization... to give the impression of reproducing the thoughts just as they come into the mind"(38). The author may slightly interfere to guide the description, and his language "fuses into the language of the character".

The next citation is a typical example of indirect interior monologue: the author marks her presence(as clearly seen in the first sentence) and then the character (Rosabel) externalizes her thoughts with coherence.

She was more than glad to reach Richmond Road, but from

the corner of the street until she came to No. 26 she thought of those four flights of stairs. Oh, why four flights! It was really criminal to expect people to live so high up. Every house ought to have a lift, something simple and inexpensive, or else an electric staircase like the one at Earl's Court — but four flights! (39)

In the description by omniscient author, as the next passage illustrates, the writer shows complete knowledge of the character's psychic life.

A sudden, ridiculous feeling of anger had seized Rosabel. She longed to throw the lovely, perishable thing in the girl's face, and bent over the hat, flushing (40).

The use of stream of consciousness is closely related to that of point of view. Talking about Katherine Mansfield's originality, Beachcroft says that before World War I the most important writers in England were Kipling, Shaw, Wells, Arnold Bennet, and Galsworthy, whose writing was mainly concerned with social matters, expressed in an adequate prose. But Katherine's literary accomplishments were totally devoted to a new form; she was creating something "new in sensitivity and point of view" (41). Even in the early story just mentioned, "The Tiredness of Rosabel," Mansfield presents her peculiar variation of third person point of view, which she better develops in her later stories. In her stylistic formulation the presence of the narrator is not rigidly consistent, for he gives the ground he holds either to one character or another, as it happens in the quote provided above to exemplify the indirect interior monologue. In its first sentence one observes the narrator describing the situation. The other sentences however, are naturally uttered by Rosabel.

Other interesting examples of Mansfield's use of point of

view can be found in the following excerpts from Kezia's stories. In the first one — taken from "The Doll's House" — the first two sentences are certainly conducted by the narrator, while the next ones are formulated(perhaps just thought) by one of the children — probably Kezia. As a matter of fact, the point of view of the child(in the stories about New Zealand) is defended by Anne Holden Rohning and other critics(42). It is especially interesting here the way the reader is addressed and involved in the story:

The hook at the side was stuck fast. Pat pried it open with his penknife, and the whole house-front swung back, and — there you were, gazing at one and the same moment into the drawing-room and dining-room, the kitchen and two bedrooms. That is the way for a house to open! Why don't all houses open like that? How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hatstand and two umbrellas! That is — isn't it? — what you long to know about a house when you put your hand on the knocker. Perhaps it is the way God opens houses at dead of night when He is taking a quiet turn with an angel....(43)

The next example is drawn from "Prelude." Here the description is likewise introduced by the narrator and suddenly overtaken by the character herself:

She [Linda] hugged her folded arms and began to laugh silently. How absurd life was — it was laughable, simply laughable. And why this mania of hers to keep alive at all? For it really was a mania, she thought, mocking and laughing.

"What am I guarding myself for so preciously? I shall go on having children and Stanley will go on making money and the children and the gardens will grow bigger and bigger, with whole fleets of aloes in them for me to choose from(44).

This other example of point of view, selected from "The Little Girl" has (in part) already been cited in this work:

Tired out, he slept before the little girl. A funny feeling came over her. Poor father! Not so big, after all — and with no one to look after him.... He was harder than the grandmother, but it was a nice hardness And every day he had to work and was too tired to be a Mr. Macdonald.... She had torn up all his beautiful writing.... She stirred suddenly, and sighed(45).

In "At the Bay" one can find the quote that follows. It is a passage to Beryl's world of fantasy, where nobody else is allowed to enter, not even the narrator. Beryl herself, assuming the role of the narrator, talks to the reader as if she were on the stage:

Why does one feel so different at night? Why is it so exciting to be awake when everybody else is sleeping? Late — it is very late! And yet every moment you feel more and more wakeful, as though you were slowly, almost with every breath, waking up into a new, wonderful, far more thrilling and exciting world than the daylight one. And what is this queer sensation that you're a conspirator? Lightly, stealthily you move about your room. You take something off the dressing-table and put it down again without a sound. And everything, even the bed-post, knows you, responds, shares your secret....

You're not very fond of your room by day. You never think about it. You're in and out, the door opens and slams, the cupboard creaks. You sit down on the side of your bed, change your shoes and dash out again. A dive down to the glass, two pins in your hair, powder your nose and off again. But now — it's suddenly dear to you. It's a darling little funny room. It's yours. Oh, what a joy it is to own things! Mine — my own!(46)

Together with point of view there is another peculiarity in Mansfield's style the critics have frequently alluded to: her use of poetic prose. Beachcroft, for example, sees in her poetical expression another sign of Theocritus' influence. R. J. Rees believes her beautiful descriptions of scenes and setting bestow poetic import on her creation, from which he quotes, asking, "who but a poet would think of a lantern 'unfurling' its light, or of men walking 'like scissors,' or the calm sea

'flopping'?"(47).

Mansfield's poetic vein is present in everything she wrote. She mixed prose and poetry as though she could not divorce one from the other. The way she wove her prose poems, therefore - "her vignettes, with their emphasis on atmosphere and mood rather than sustained sincerity or event"(48), resembles the treatment she applied to the short stories, as one can sum up from the reading of the following verses in "Vignette III,"

Oh! This monotonous, terrible rain. The dull, steady, hopeless sound of it. I have drawn the curtains across the window to shut out the weeping face of the world...
... And I listen and think and dream until my life seems not one life, but a thousand million lives, and my soul is weighed down with the burden of past existence, with the vague, uneasy consciousness of future strivings(49).

To present a clearer evidence of Mansfield's poetic descriptions let us now quote two passages from "At the Bay" - the most poetical of Kezia's stories. In the first one Linda compares the wonderful completeness of nature with man's limitations, due to the rude responsibilities Life imposes on him:

Dazzling white the picotees shone; the golden-eyed marigolds glittered; the nasturtiums wreathed the veranda poles in green and gold flame. If only one had time to look at these flowers long enough, time to get over the sense of novelty and strangeness, time to know them! But as soon as one paused to part the petals, to discover the under-side of the leaf, along came Life and one was swept away. And, lying in her cane chair, Linda felt so light; she felt like a leaf. Along came Life like a wind and she was seized and shaken; she had to go. Oh, dear, would it always be so? Was there no escape?(50)

Through this quotation the writer gains poetic effect with the use of concrete images, personification, similes, alliteration,

repetition, and strong emotion.

The second passage is equally poetical for the profusion of images it envelops. Like a skilled painter who is familiar with every trick to reproduce reality, the writer ingeniously uses vivid colours, strong verbs and adjectives, artful movements, delicate sounds and even touch and smell, to make the New Zealand scenery come alive before the eyes of the reader:

The tide was out; the beach was deserted; lazily flopped the warm sea. The sun beat down, beat down hot and fiery on the fine sand, baking the grey and blue and black and white-veined pebbles. It sucked up the little drop of water that lay in the hollow of the curved shells; it bleached the pink convolvulus that threaded through and through the sand-hills. Nothing seemed to move but the small sand-hoppers. Pit-pit-pit! They were never still.

Over there on the weed-hung rocks that looked at low tide like shaggy beasts come down on the water to drink, the sunlight seemed to spin like a silver coin dropped into each of the small rock pools. They danced, they quivered, and minute ripples laved the porous shores.... Underneath waved the sea-forest — pink thread-like trees, velvet anemones, and orange berry-spotted weeds.... Something was happening to the pink, waving trees; they were changing to a cold moonlight blue. And now there sounded the faintest "plop." Who made that sound? What was going on down there? And how strong, how damp the seaweed smelt in the hot sun.... (51)

For Eileen Baldeshwiler, Mansfield's poetical expression derives from Chekhov's lyrical narrative. The writer, Eileen says, "sometimes achieves the exact balance between realistic detail and delicate suggestiveness that the lyric story demands" (52). So, besides Theocritus, Katherine Mansfield is said to have been influenced by Russian writers, especially Chekhov. This is only natural to understand since most of Mansfield's contemporaries profited somehow from the Russians' craftsmanship. It was in the beginning of the twentieth century

that Russian literature was first translated into English — especially by Constance Garnett — and British writers praised it enthusiastically. Arnold Bennett, just to mention one, declared that "Russian fiction never did evolve..." but "it began right off with masterpieces." Bennett considered Chekhov "a greater writer than Maupassant" (53).

Chekhov's direct concern with the individual, with the common man living in Russia, with simplicity, with "the indistinctive motives and clumsiness of human behaviour" (54), touched the English reader profoundly. That Katherine Mansfield admired Chekhov is plainly evident a fact. In her *Journal* she confessed that she could "give every single word de Maupassant and Tumpany ever wrote for one short story by Anton Tchekhov" (55). She was certainly aware of Chekhov's advices on the dealing with the short story and she must have heeded his orientations with keen interest. To be cold and objective was one of Chekhov's lessons. The writer, he said, should preserve "a stance which is consistent in its dispassionate coolness" (56), in order to illuminate or emphasize the emotions felt by the character. "Best of all," he continued, "is to avoid depicting the hero's state of mind; you ought to try and make it clear from the hero's actions" (57).

The terse presentation of character — well defended by Chekhov — was something Katherine Mansfield displayed with mastery. This is what one can witness in the case of *Kezia*, for example. Katherine never describes the girl physically, neither tells how she feels, but using the dramatic method, she portrays the girl's actions and attitudes, deftly making the reader

perceive Kezia's inner self. That Mansfield was following Chekhov's counsel, is something many critics believe, but another possibility is that the writer had a natural affinity with Chekhov. When she finds description necessary, for example, she does it very well. One can even say that Chekhov's typical use of detail finds resonance in Mansfield's stories. As Rees points out, Katherine "had a sharp eye for details; the texture of a dress, the effect of light on a tree, the colour of flowers on a vase"(58). To illustrate, let us look at this passage from "At the Bay" where she highlights the beauty of early morning:

The sun was rising. It was marvellous how quickly the mist thinned, sped away, dissolved from the shallow plain, rolled up from the bush and was gone as if in a hurry to escape; big twists and curls jostled and shouldered each other as the silvery beams broadened. The faraway sky — a bright, pure blue — was reflected in the puddles, and the drops, swimming along the telegraph poles, flashed into points of light. Now the leaping, glittering sea was so bright it made one's eyes ache to look at it(59).

Examining again "The Tiredness of Rosabel," probably written before she had had any contact with Chekhov, one finds in it Chekhovian features: an expressive treatment given to setting, atmosphere and character, rather than to incident; the depiction of "the so-called small things, so that truly everything is significant"(as Katherine said to Garnet), something new for the British writers. In Alpers' words, "the short story in that sense did not exist in England yet"(60).

Giving very little importance to plot, Mansfield focusses her attention on usual incidents of everyday life and recreates them loosely, that is to say, without worrying about the elaboration of either a beginning or an end. In "The Tiredness

of Rosabel," as Elizabeth Bowen says, "nothing happens," and Valerie Shaw adds, "meaning is derived almost entirely from the drab fixity of the girl's surroundings"(61). Young Rosabel goes to her poor lodgings in Paddington, after a hard workday at a millinery shop. She is hungry, moneyless, and lonely, but her head is full of dreams. After taking off her wet clothes and boots, she kneels by the little window, in the dark, and gives herself in to fantasy. She dreams of a rich couple she had helped that morning and fancies she is the fortunate girl that would marry the handsome man, "while into the dream reminders are slipped of Rosabel's actual surroundings, so that the story runs on three time-levels at once: in the shop, in the bedsitter, and in the dream-home of the fancied marriage"(62).

The story is typical of Katherine Mansfield in many ways, for it abounds in characteristics one could easily encounter in her other tales. First(as it happens with Kezia's stories, for example), it opens without any introduction and the protagonist is hardly described. At the end of the tale the reader succeeds in having an idea of Rosabel's physical appearance and personality, by piecing together some information Mansfield has scattered along the story. Second, the tale closes smoothly, without presenting any change in the life of the central character who, afflicted by lack of love, support and security, seeks refuge in a fantastic dream, abandoning it eventually to adjust herself to crude reality. Rosabel's dream(that she was "the most famous woman at the ball that night," and that "a foreign Prince desired to be presented to this English wonder"(63), is not different from Beryl's in "Prelude" who, longing to find a good husband to offer her a comfortable life, imagines that "a young man,

immensely rich, has just arrived from England. He meets her quite by chance..." and becomes very interested in her(64). Third, exactly like in Beryl's and Linda's manifestations of fantasy, there is dialogue in Rosabel's day-dream, apparently accompanied by dramatic gestures. Fourth, the story shows Mansfield's special use of point of view, which has already been appreciated. Finally — similarly to Kezia's stories — "The Tiredness of Rosabel" is drawn on the writer's own experience: Rosabel's dwelling is just like Beauchamp Lodge, the hostel Katherine was living in at the time. Like Rosabel, Katherine was alone in the big city, struggling to succeed in life.

Still, "The Tiredness of Rosabel"(like most of Mansfield's tales, including Kezia's stories) presents beautiful descriptions derived from the character's rich imagination, as the following paragraphs can attest,

...a girl...who was reading **Anna Lombard** in a cheap, paper-covered edition, and the rain had tear-spattered the pages(65).

...the street was blurred and misty, but light striking on the panes turned their dullness to opal and silver, and the jeweller's shops seen through this, were fairy palaces(66).

Westbourne Grove looked as she had always imagined Venice to look at night, mysterious, dark, even the hansoms were like gondolas dodging up and down, and the light trailing luridly — tongues of flame licking the wet street — magic fish swimming in the Grand Canal(67).

Furthermore, the theme Mansfield depicts in this story — the difficult position of the single woman in society and her desire to get married, as confirmed in the previous chapter — constitutes a recurrent subject matter in the author's opus wherein Rosabel can stand as a type, one may say. The Kind of difficulties Rosabel faces(the struggle within her bosom)

determines the very essence of the material Mansfield chose to work with. Her stories unfold all sorts of psychological conflicts, as demonstrated in Kezia's stories, "Life of Ma Parker," "The Fly," "Miss Brill," "Bliss," and "Something Childish But Very Natural." It is the subtle treatment of human feeling and behaviour, along with her exclusive molding of narrative, that makes Katherine Mansfield modern, renowned and influential, among so many short story writers of her day.

Mansfield's influential talent has been reckoned by anthologists. Hallie and Whit Burnett in their anthology **The Modern Short Story in the Making** (1964) and Austen McGiffert Wright in **The American Short Story in the Twenties** (1961), considered her an influential short story practitioner, together with Sherwood Anderson, Katherine Anne Porter, and Elizabeth Bowen. According to Beachcroft, the short story writers of the 1920s and 1930s, both in England and America, had a common trace: the quest for a new form. The new form found in Katherine Mansfield's pieces was responsible for her recognition in England and overseas.

Beachcroft, writing about the earliness of **Bliss** (1920), asserts that Mansfield's book came before "the proliferation of short story courses in Universities," before the "literary criticism of the 1920s and 1930s," before "Percy Lubbock's **The Craft of Fiction**, E. M. Forster's **Aspects of the Novel**, I. A. Richard's **Principles of Literary Criticism**," and before the philosophical criticism of T. S. Eliot (68).

This way Katherine Mansfield proved to possess a powerful intuition. Far from being guided by any kind of analysis or biased criticism, her individual expression sprang from her pen

naturally, from her very initiation in the art of story-telling, as one can perceive in the reading of "The Tiredness of Rosabel."

Mansfield's borrowings from Theocritus, Chekhov, or any other writer must have been significant. Her contributions, on the other hand, have certainly weighed much more than that. She has dabbed the short story with mixed hues and shades that only her brush knew how to combine to strike the most extraordinary effect. The innovations she has adopted — the abolishing of the narrator, the use of dramatic method, fantasy and poetic prose, the terse presentation of character contrasted with the careful description of details — equipped her with the certificate of a good short story writer.

But Katherine Mansfield volunteered some further grants to short fiction. By parting with the tradition of a "beginning, middle, and an end," Katherine was introducing the fragmented tale, something well identified with the work of contemporary writers, for it fits the chaotic condition of current society. Also, the existential themes Mansfield portrays in her tales — especially in Kezia's stories — such as anxiety, suffering, rejection, and the like, are still crucial in the works of Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, Joyce Carol Oates, Samuel Beckett, Donald Barthelme, and Paul Bowels, to mention some of the main short story writers of our time.

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CONCLUSION

The material displayed in the preceding chapters has pinpointed the fact that KEZIA'S STORIES do fill the most important page ever written by KATHERINE MANSFIELD. Besides regarding children and their challenging position in the adult prevailing environment they dwell, Kezia's stories epitomize not only the general themes and ideas Mansfield treated in her works (such as lack of love, dissatisfaction, loneliness, and death; fantasy; desire for freedom and sexuality, marriage and motherhood; social prejudice, and the revelation of a simple heart), but her personal technique of expression as well — namely the subtle treatment of human feelings and behaviour; the portrayal of a definite moment; the careful descriptions of scenes, setting, and details, contrasted with the terse presentation of character; the combination of mime with narration, from which Mansfield's peculiar use of point view and dramatic method have sprung; the use of poetic prose; the introduction of the fragmented tale in English, and the revelation of the writer's own experiences. These four stories alone testify the writer's great ability to create and her tireless dedication to the study and propagation of the literary art (as demonstrated in chapter I) for it was severely sick that she composed "At the Bay" and "The Doll's House" — perhaps the richest samples of her production.

Mansfield's poor health contributed somehow to the various

troubles that assailed her on her last days, such as lack of companionship and support from her husband, relatives and friends. But these were obstacles she amazingly smothered to create the lovely poetical pages that transmit tranquility and joy to the reader. Even the stories that picture the ugly side of life, or the soul immersed in suffering, anguish, and hopelessness (here exemplified especially through the quotes provided to show theme in the conclusion of chapter II) happen to be curiously dosed with her beautiful descriptions of setting, sentiment and reflections.

This is not to say that those striking descriptions are absent from Kezia's stories. Actually, it is right there that Mansfield's treatment of setting and feeling acquires its greatest dimension. Can any adult, for instance, entirely visualize the tremendous fear and distress that possess the heart of a little child who is spanked by her father for having torn some of his papers when her only purpose was to make him a present for his birthday? Or can a sensible grown-up likewise understand the extension of the disappointment that afflicts a little girl who — in the excitement of moving to a new house, far in the country — is fastidiously pushed aside by her mother and left on the street, together with part of the furniture, to be picked up later by some man?

Those ugly experiences were faced by Kezia in "The Little Girl" and in "Prelude" respectively. In the first story the child cries bitterly for this is the only way she can express her grief. In the latter, however, a bit older and already developing her indescribable capacity of endurance, Kezia, holding the hand of her little sister Lottie,

...stared with round solemn eyes first at the 'absolute necessities' [her mother's words] and then at their mother.

"We shall simply have to leave them. That is all. We shall simply have to cast them off," said Linda Burnell. A strange little laugh flew from her lips: she leaned back against the buttoned leather cushions and shut her eyes, her lips trembling with laughter...

At the last moment Kezia let go Lottie's hand and darted towards the buggy.

"I want to kiss my granma good-bye again."

But she was too late. The buggy rolled off up the road.... twinkled away in the sunlight and fine golden dust up the hill and over. Kezia bit her lip, but Lottie, carefully finding her handkerchief first, set up a wail(1).

The above quotation, one may say, furnishes a tangible example of Mansfield's subtle way of describing character. In Kezia's stories the writer is particularly keen on tracing the development of Kezia, as the analyses of the stories in chapter II show. Mansfield makes the reader sympathize with the child from the beginning of the story and (in a regular crescendo) she cleverly illustrates Kezia's rejection and troubles, contrasting them with the protagonist's good disposition and winning personality. The analyses of the stories also confirm Mansfield's identification with her well-favoured character. They register the affinities detached between Kathleen Beauchamp and Kezia Burnell, having an eye to their dissimilarities as well.

Though the second chapter has considered some aspects of Katherine's style, it is in chapter III that the author's mode of writing is fully appreciated. Looking at those quotes in the conclusion of chapter II once more, it is clear that they present a crucial moment in the life of the characters, thus revealing this important facet of Mansfield's expression: the portrayal of the moment — one of her innovations in the short story in English, as it was pointed out in chapter III.

In Kezia's stories descriptions of the moment abound and they are accompanied by another of Mansfield's mannerisms of writing: her depiction of details and trivialities. The descriptive precision of Mansfield's portrayals approached her creation to that of the painter, evincing the influence of Post-Impressionism upon her work, according to the considerations maintained in chapter III. Many are the times, when, adorning her descriptions with poetical nuances, Mansfield excels the meticulous painter as one can observe in the following extract from "At the Bay,"

Round the corner of Crescent Bay, between the piled-up masses of broken rock, a flock of sheep came pattering.... Behind them an old sheep-dog, his soaking paw covered with sand, ran along with his nose to the ground, but carelessly, as if thinking of something else. And then in the rocky gateway the shepherd himself appeared. He was a lean, up-right old man, in a frieze coat that was covered with a web of tiny drops, velvet trousers tied under the knee, and a wide-awake with a folded blue handkerchief round the brim. One hand was crammed into his belt, the other grasped a beautifully smooth yellow stick. And as he walked, taking his time, he kept up a very soft light whistling, an airy, far-away fluting that sounded mournful and tender(2).

It has been said thus far that Katherine Mansfield was praised for her tenacious performance, and her stylistic innovations such as the description of the moment, the depiction of minute details, and the poetical narrative. But the foregoing chapters showed other characteristics of the writer, one could review here. The fusion of the narrator and character, for example, which gave birth to Mansfield's exquisite use of point of view, is another evident pattern of her fiction. In those mentioned quotations selected to express theme in chapter II (principally in the ones from "Life of Ma Parker," "Miss Brill" and "Something Childish"), one has difficulty in separating the

narrator's words from those of the characters', for the writer — 'revealing rather than telling' — eclipses the narrator's force, as she introduces her dramatic method, another mark of her production.

In Kezia's stories as well as in others she wrote about New Zealand(different from the ones she settled in Europe, which in general present the first person narration), the presence of the child is so constant that some critics agree it is the child who tells the story(3). As it was stated in the opening of this work, Katherine Mansfield in her stories frequently resorts to children, and(as the work can confirm) she oftentimes turns to her birthplace as well. In a letter to S. M. Katherine once wrote,

I think the only way to live as a writer is to draw upon one's real, familiar life — to find the treasure.... And the curious thing is that if we describe this which seems to us so intensely personal, other people take it to themselves and understand it as if it were their own(4).

Mansfield's testimony certifies once and for all that she wrote about her family life. Because she left home so early (when she was twenty years old), the experiences that peopled her reminiscences were those of childhood — the only period she happened to share with her relatives fully. That is probably why she wrote about children so much. Restricting the comments here to Kezia's stories, there is a little child trying to please a severe father in "The Little Girl," a rejected daughter being criticized and scolded constantly in "Prelude" and "At the Bay," reacting however with understanding and serenity because of the compassionate support of a peaceloving grandmother. And finally in "The Doll's House" one sees the result of good orientation

and persistend care: little Kezia(far from becoming an egotist like her classmates) proves to possess a healthy interest in the others, protecting the poverty-stricken girls at school, in spite of her relatives' objection.

Among all the children that parade Mansfield's stories, Kezia is by far the one that most deserved her attention. One or two tales were not enough to narrate everything she wanted to tell about her. And telling about Kezia must have been a pleasure to Mansfield, for it was like meeting an old dear friend with whom (due to the healable effect of time) only good happenings had been shared.

The writer's identification with her character has been noted by critics. Ruth E. Mantz when writing the author's biography says that even when very little the writer played with and wrote about an imaginary companion — a little girl that was herself. In Mantz's words, "...Kathleen often turned to her own duality for companionship — as Katherine turned, later, to Kezia"(5).

Hence, the role that the child Kezia plays in Mansfield's fiction is rather important. That is why one should not hesitate to affirm that Kezia's stories are of major significance. They were primarily meaning to the writer because they served as a catharsis, relieving her bosom of long-hidden emotions and perhaps remorse. On a second level of importance, the tales about Kezia are relevant to the reader, for(as widely exemplified in this work) they are imbued with Mansfield's best expression, representing therefore, the zenith of her fictional creation. Because of the richness of Kezia's stories this present analysis is far from covering all the aspects the tales hold. Any clever

reader can confirm this assertion by digging and finding out new precious elements in Mansfield's fountainhead. Like a good earth which is never tired to yield its production, Kezia's stories (when properly sowed and mowed) will provide excellent fruit to assuage the intellectual hunger of the reader.

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